

Greeting: *"Christ is Risen!"* Response: *"Indeed, He is Risen!"*



Orthodox Church of the Mother of God

OCA – Diocese of New York-New Jersey

V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce, Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson

Sub-Deacon Vlash

Parish Council President: Trudy Ellmore

Parish Council Vice President: Holly Dawson



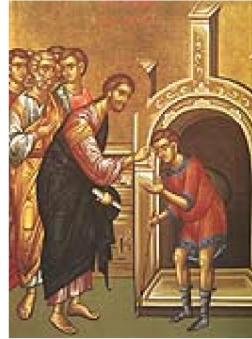
Sunday, May 17, 2015

Gospel: John 9:1-38

Tone 5

Epistle: Acts 16:16-34

6th Sunday of Pascha; Sunday of the Blind Man



Sunday of the Blind Man

**Glory to
Jesus Christ!**

**Glory
Forever!**

*I come to You, O Christ, Blind from birth in my spiritual eyes
And I call to You in repentance:
You are the most radiant light of those in darkness!*

Today the Church Remembers

Sunday of the Blind Man • Apostle Andronicus of the Seventy • St Junia • St Euphrosyne the Princess, (Eudoxia) of Moscow • Martyr's Solochon, Pamphamirus, Pamphalon at Chalcedon • St Stephen the Archbishop of Constantinople • Venerable Dodo of the St David-Gareji Monastery, Georgia • Greatmartyr Nicholas of Sofia • St Athanasius the New, Wonderworker and Archbishop of Christianopolis

Weekly Bulletin Sponsors

For Health of:

John Dantinne on his birthday, offered by his family, with love.

Phil Ellmore on his birthday, offered by his wife Trudy.

Babes, Mom & Mom-mom on Mother's Day, offered by thankful husband, Babes.

In Eternal Memory of:

Vyacheslav Markevich, offered by his daughter Tatsiana Markevich DaGrosa and family.

Liturgical Schedule:

Sunday, May 17th

9:30 am: Church School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, May 20th

6:30 pm: 6:30 PM - Vespers Liturgy for
the Ascension

Saturday, May 23rd

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, May 24th

9:30 am: Church School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, May 30th

No Vespers

Sunday, May 31st

9:30 am: Church School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Hierarchical Liturgy

Readings:

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: 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 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.



Bulletin Sponsor: Use the sign-up sheet at the candle stand for the health of, eternal memory of or a Pannikhida for a loved one or friend, for a donation of \$10. Sponsors will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

Memorial Candles: Candles be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one and \$2 for a small one.

Private Confessions: Can be heard a half hour before any service. See Father Matthew for other times and **General Confession:** Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

Pannikhida Service: The third Sunday of each month there will be a Pannikhida after Divine Liturgy. If you would like your loved ones to be remembered please give a list of names to Father Matthew before that Sunday for those to be remembered in the month.

Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail:
Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org

Volunteers are needed to clean the church. Please use the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board downstairs or candle stand, to indicate when you can help.

The Living Clean Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Friday from 8-9:15 pm downstairs in the community room.

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.



Orthodox Church of the Mother of God: Parish News

The Parish Council will be meeting on Sunday, May 31st downstairs in the community room at 12:15 PM.

Sub-Deacon Vlash has accepted the call to once again serve with an **OCMC Youth Outreach Mission Team** going to Albania June 15 to July 1, 2015 and to go on a pilgrimage to **Mt. Athos** (the Holy Mountain) in Greece July 1 to July 9, 2015. Please remember him in your prayers in his many preparations. If your heart is moved to support him financially, please speak to him for information on how to do so. Every dollar donated over the cost of the trip will be given to the orphanage (Children’s Home of Hope on the grounds of the Shen Vlash Monastery and Resurrection of Christ Theological Academy in Durres, Albania).

Sunday, May 10, Mother’s Day, was a glorious and blessed day! Receiving our bishop to celebrate Divine Liturgy was a joy and honor. The day was topped off with Rdr. Charles’ being elevated to the Sub-Diaconate.

Thank you to ALL who worked so hard to prepare and receive His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, his mother and his sister. From those who helped to beautify the church inside and out before the day arrived - to those who cleaned up at the end of the day – and ALL those in between – Thanks be to God for your holy hands and hearts!



Our very own **Reader Charles Gallagher** was elevated to the Sub-Diaconate by His Eminence, Abp. Michael on Sunday, May 10, 2015. He took as his name, Vlash, Albanian for St. Blaise. Congratulations SDcn. Vlash! God grant you many blessed years.



Coming Events for Your Calendar

June 13, 2015

NJ Deanery Church School Teachers Conference
Christ the Savior Church, Paramus, NJ
Teachers, please make every effort to attend!!

August 20, 2015

Orthodox Youth Day
Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Jackson, NJ
Six Flags Great Adventure

August 23, 2015

NJ Deanery Clergy Family Picnic

September 2-3, 2015

Clergy Conference
Assumption of the Virgin Church, Clifton, NJ



Sisterhood of the Protector of the Mother of God News

There will be a Sisterhood meeting on Sunday July 5th after Divine Liturgy and coffee hour downstairs in the community room.



NY/NJ Diocese News

Our diocese celebrated the 5th Anniversary of the Consecration of His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, on Saturday, 9 May 2015. The day began at 9:30 a.m. with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at Saint John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Passaic NJ, and concluded with a 1:00 p.m. celebratory luncheon at “The Brownstone” in Paterson NJ. Clergy and faithful throughout the diocese -- those attending these special gatherings as well as those unable to be present -- joined in prayers of thanksgiving for the past 5 years of Archpastoral care, faithfulness, and love manifested through

Archbishop Michael’s guidance and leadership.

“Many Years!”

*to our beloved spiritual father in Christ
and shepherd of the Lord’s flock
abiding in New York and New Jersey.*



Investing in Your Marriage

Join us on Monday, May 18th from 1:30-2:30PM (EST) for a webinar featuring Ary Christofidis, PhD, LCP.

This webinar is for all couples in all stages of life, and will discuss how including Christ and the teachings of our Holy Church help couples overcome both the day to day obstacles, as well as evil influences that may negatively effect their union.

To register visit:
zoom.us/webinar/register/54d59f0d9a8b59ddc5b9141539e44ee6



Sponsored by the Center for Family Care of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America 845-424-8175 // familycare@goarch.org facebook.com/centerforfamilycare



Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News

St. Tikhon’s site of PaTram Institute’s second choral class July 13-18, 2015

A mixed choir and conductor’s class titled “Cultivating Pearls” will be offered by the [Patriarch Tikhon Russian American Institute](#) [PaTRAM] in conjunction with [Blagovest Bells](#) at Saint Tikhon’s [Monastery](#) and [Seminary](#) here July 13-18, 2015.

Instructors include Vladimir Gorbik, PaTram’s Artistic Director and Choirmaster at Moscow’s Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra Podvorye, who will teach conducting virtually from Moscow; Vladimir Morosan, Founder of Musica Russica, who will offer instructions in technique and lecture on congregational singing; Benedict Sheehan, Music Instructor at Saint Tikhon’s Monastery and Seminary, who will offer instruction in conducting and voice; Mark Galperin, General Manager of Blagovest Bells, who will lecture on bell ringing; and Constantine Stade, bell installation and ringing specialist, who also will offer instruction in bell ringing.

The program will focus on techniques and materials specifically applicable to small choirs—from two to eight singers—singing repertoire in English, including small ensemble vocal, conducting, and rehearsal techniques. Each participant will be coached personally. Singers will be placed in one of several small ensembles, in which they will receive personal voice coaching in confident, yet sensitive ensemble singing. Conducting applicants, chosen by audition, will have private conducting coaching and will lead the small ensembles in the services, including the closing Vigil and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Sessions are open to all singers, conductors and faithful in general.

Participants will stay at the newly constructed Pioneer Plaza Best Western Hotel, Carbondale, PA. Daily dinners and lectures will be held in the hotel’s ballroom, while all other sessions will be conducted at Saint Tikhon’s Monastery.

To obtain additional information and to register, please visit [PaTRAM’s web site](#).



Sunday of the Blind Man



After the Midfeast (John 7:14), the Lord Jesus Christ came to the Temple again and taught the people who came to Him (John 8:2). After leaving the Temple, He opened the eyes of a man “who was blind from his birth (John 9:1).

The miracle described in today’s Gospel (John 9:1-38) is even more remarkable than it might seem at first. St Basil and other Fathers tell us that this was not just a case of giving sight to a blind man born with eyes that did not function, but to someone who had no eyes at all! The second Exapostilarion for this Sunday says, “Along the way, our Savior found a man who lacked both sight and eyes...”

The Gospel says, “Since the world began, it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one who was born blind” (John 9:32). There are examples in the Old (Tobit 2:17) and New (Mark 8:22-26) Testaments of blind people receiving sight, but this is something completely unprecedented.

The Savior placed clay in the man’s empty sockets and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. When he obeyed these instructions, the eyes of clay became living eyes!

In his MENAION, St Demetrius of Rostov calls the blind man St Celidonius (see his account of St Lazarus in the Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles on January 4).

Patristic Wisdom for Daily Living with the Church Fathers:

The harmony of the universe

When the church in Corinth was disturbed by factions, St. Clement, one of the earliest popes, wrote the Corinthians a gentle but firm letter reminding them that Christians should live together in peace and submission to the will of God. All of creation, he says, peacefully obeys God’s law, and we shall learn peace and obedience from nature.

The heavens turn, ruled by the Lord, and are peacefully subject to Him. Day and night run along the tracks he made for them, never getting in each other’s way. The sun and moon, and the legions of stars, roll on in harmony by his command, in their own prescribed limits, never deviating from them.

The fruitful earth, by his will, brings forth food in abundance, at the proper seasons, for humans and animals and everything that lives on it—never hesitating, never changing any of the laws he has fixed. The unsearchable abysses and the indescribable plan of the lower world are kept in their bounds by the same laws.

The vast immeasurable sea, gathered together by his work into the different basins, never passes beyond the bounds set around it, but does what he commanded it to do. For he said, “Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed” (Job 38:11). The ocean, which no man can cross, and the worlds beyond it are regulated by the same divine legislation.

The seasons peacefully make way for one another.

The winds from all directions serve without hindrance at their proper times.

The ever-flowing springs, made for our enjoyment and our health, give their breasts for our life without fail.

The very smallest creatures meet together in peace and good order.

The great Creator and Lord

Of all has appointed all these things to exist in peace and harmony. And he does good to all, but most generously to those who have fled for refuge to his compassion through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory and majesty forever. Amen.

—St. Clement, *1 Corinthians*, 20

In God’s Presence, consider....

Do I move in harmony with God’s law, or am I standing in the way of what God wants? Am I listening to what God wants to teach me through the natural world?

Closing Prayer:

Father, I thank you for everything beautiful in the world, and for all the happiness you give me: for the light of the sun, and the light of your Word; for the earth and all its people; and for the life you have given me to enjoy.

Prayers by the Lake, St. Nikolai Velimirovich:

Just a little longer and my journey will end. Keep me on the steep path to You just a little longer, O Conqueror of death; because the higher I climb towards You, the more people try to drag me down—into their abyss. The fuller their abyss becomes, the greater their hope is of defeating You. In truth, the fuller the abyss becomes, the further away from the abyss You are.

How stupid the servants of the tree of knowledge are! They do not measure their strength in You, but in their numbers. They do not adopt a law of justice in Your name, but by their numbers. Whichever way the majority of them choose is the way of truth and justice. The tree of knowledge has become the tree of crime, stupidity, and icy darkness.

Truly, the knowledgeable men of this world know everything except that they are servants of Satan. When the last day dawns, Satan will

rejoice in the number of people in his harvest. All the meager ears of grain! But in his stupidity, even Satan counts on quantity rather than quality. One of Your ears of grain will be worth more than the entire harvest of Satan. For You, O Conqueror of death, rely on the fullness of the bread of life, and not on numbers.

In vain I tell the godless: "Head for the Tree of Life and you will know more than you could possibly wish to know. From the tree of knowledge Satan fashions a ladder for you to descend into the nether world."

The godless ridicule me and say: "Through the Tree of Life you want to convert us to your God, whom we do not see."

In truth, you will never see Him. The Light that even blinds the eyes of the seraphim will bum your pupils forever.

Of all that thrives in the putrescence of the earth, those who believe in God are the rarest. O lake and mountain, help me to be glad that I, too, am journeying with these most rare, most unlearned, and most despised believers.

Just a little longer, brethren, and our journey will end.

Sustain us just a little longer, O Conqueror of death.

Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church

God and Us – How does God relate to us?

God loves us more than a father, mother, friend, or any else could love, and even more than we are able to love ourselves.

St. John Chrysostom

The Prologue of Ohrid

St. Nikolai Velimirovic

Reflection

Following a terrible earthquake in Antioch, St. John Chrysostom spoke to the people: "Great are the fruits of an earthquake. Behold the Man-loving Lord Who quakes the city and strengthens the soul, Who sways the foundation and strengthens the thoughts, Who shows the weakness of the city and makes the will of the people powerful! Turn your attention to His love for mankind: He sways for a while - and strengthens forever; earthquake - for two days, but the devotion should remain for all times; you were sorrowful for a short time - but strengthened forever. A mother, wanting to wean her child from the habit of frequent crying, strongly rocks its little crib not in order to harm it, but to frighten it. Precisely, thus the Lord of all, Who holds the universe in His hands shakes it, not in order to destroy it, but rather to bring back those men to salvation who live lawlessly." Behold this is how the Holy Fathers, the pillars of the Universal Church, knew how to explain God's love for man, both assaults in the same way as good works, and misfortune the same way as fortune. Let us who are slow to give thanks to God be ashamed when He gives and quick in our murmuring toward him when He takes away.

Contemplation

To contemplate the action of God the Holy Spirit upon the holy martyrs for the Faith:

1. How the Holy Spirit gives them wisdom to speak before judges;
2. How the Holy Spirit gives them courage to die on the scaffold.

Homily:

About the Holy Spirit the Comforter

"But the Comforter the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you" (St. John 14:26).

What practical meaning do these words have, if not that it is necessary that we pray daily that the Holy Spirit be sent to us just as we pray every day for our daily bread? God is willing to send us the Holy Spirit every day but He seeks that we pray daily for the Holy Spirit. For as in regard to bread, which is at one time abundant and at another time scarce, so it is also in regard to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to us and departs from us, according to our zealotness and our slothfulness in prayer, according to our good deeds and our patience. That is the reason why the Church established that morning services begin with an invocation of the Holy Spirit: "O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Come!", and after that comes the prayer: "give us our daily bread!" Why? Because, without the Holy Spirit, we do not even know how to use bread as it should be used for our salvation.

"He shall teach you all things." That is: every day and every night, according to the conditions and circumstances in which you will find yourself in, He will direct you, counsel you, teach you what you should think, what you should say and what you should do. For that reason, implore from God only the Holy Spirit and all else He Himself will bring with Him all that you will need at that particular moment. When the Holy Spirit shall descend upon you, you will know all, understand all and you will be capable of all that is necessary.

"And bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said to you." That is: do not be afraid that you will forget my teaching and my words. The Holy Spirit also knows all that I know so when He will be present in you all My teaching will be present in you, together with Him.

O Lord, Holy Spirit deign to descend upon us not according to our merits but according to the merits of the Lord Jesus and according to Your infinite goodness.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.