

## Hymns for the Sunday of the Paralytic

*-By the pool of Probatika lay a Paralytic. Seeing You, O Lord, he cried out: "I have no one to plunge me into the pool once the water has been stirred up! By the time I get there, someone else has gone in ahead of me and received healing. Thus I remain paralyzed!" The Savior was touched with compassion and said to him: "I have become a man for your sake. I have assumed flesh for your sake. How can you say that you have no one? Pick up your mat, I say, and walk!" All things are subject to You, Lord; all things obey You; You do whatever You wish. Be mindful of us all, O holy God, and in Your love for Mankind, take pity on us! (Vespers)*

*-You hold the whole universe in Your hand, O Lord Jesus, coeternal with Your divine Father and sharing sovereign power with the Spirit, You appeared in the flesh, healing diseases and banishing demons. You gave sight to the blind; You made the Paralytic rise up and walk by Your divine word. You told him to carry his stretcher. With him, we celebrate and sing: "Glory to Your might, O Merciful Christ! (Orthros)*



## SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC



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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM  
May 3, 2020

After Blessed is the Kingdom... Christ is Risen... 3X

### Antiphon (1st)

1: Shout joyfully to God, all you on earth.

**O Son of God, Who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!**

2- Sing praise to the glory of His name; proclaim His glorious praise.

**Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka.  
Haleloueya.**

3- Say to God how tremendous are Your deeds! For Your great strength Your enemies fawn upon You

**O Son of God, Who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.**

### Entrance Hymn

**Priest:** In the assemblies bless the Lord our God, from the wellsprings of Israel.

**People:** **O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!**

### Resurrectional Troparion (Tone 3)

Let all in heaven rejoice, and all on earth be glad, for the Lord has exerted power with His arm: By death He has trampled upon Death and has become the firstborn from the dead. He has delivered us from the bosom of Hades and has granted to the world great mercy.

### Patronal Troparion (Tone 1, Pg. 15)

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity, and in falling asleep, you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life, being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

### Kondakion (Tone 2)

Though You went down in the tomb, O Immortal One, You overthrew the power of Hades and rose victorious, O Christ God. You greeted the ointment bearing women saying, "Rejoice!" You gave peace to Your Apostles, and to those who had fallen, resurrection!

We, however, need to embrace this gift, lest it wither away and we become blind or paralyzed. We do this, the epistle continues, by practicing virtue, self-control, godliness, perseverance, brotherly kindness and love. "*For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins*" (2 Pt 1:8, 9). Fruitful Christian life, then, requires that we do our part to make our own the gift of divine life we have received.

We can become shortsighted or even blind to the gift of our baptism, remaining barren and unfruitful – in other words, paralyzed – without being committed to growing in virtue, knowledge, self-control and the rest. We may see this happen in the life of some Christians who do not consider their baptism seriously: who rarely look to the Gospel, receive the Eucharist, or even attend the Liturgy. They are blind to the gift of Christ and, therefore, paralyzed in the spiritual life. We see it in ourselves, when we cannot focus on the words we read or even the prayers we are saying, distracted by the concerns of daily life.

### **Paralysis and the Passions**

As more philosophically minded Greeks accepted Christ, they identified the signs of spiritual paralysis in terms of the classical passions; gluttony, lust, greed, anger, envy, sloth, pride and vainglory. Someone who is focused on personal comforts (through food and drink, sex or material possessions) will find it difficult, if not impossible, to center on the spiritual life. If they attend church at all, they find their mind wandering back to the object of their passion.

A story is told about St Basil, the revered Fool for Christ, who confronted Tsar Ivan the Terrible one day, because he was not at the Liturgy. Ivan protested that he was indeed in church for the service. Basil replied that the emperor's body was in church, but his mind was on the Vorobiev hills (where he was having a palace built). When Basil died in 1557, the Tsar acted as one of his pallbearers.

It would be even harder for people ruled by their pride or vanity to look beyond themselves to God or others. Their piety dries up "*like baked clay*" (Ps 21:16), withered like a plant with too much sun and no water. This is why combating the passions has been seen as fundamental to a committed Christian life, since the dawn of monasticism in the third century.

In his Homily 37 on the Gospel of John, St John Chrysostom discusses the spiritual medicines necessary to combat the passions and other distractions from the Christian life. "The divine Oracles [the Scriptures] are a treasury of all manner of medicines, so that whether it be needful to quench pride, to lull desire to sleep, to tread underfoot the love of money, to despise pain, to inspire confidence, to gain patience, from them one may find abundant resource." The Scriptures held the medicine; the illnesses were the passions.

### **The Church as Healer**

While the Scriptures portray the incarnate Christ as Healer of the man at Bethesda, it depicts the Body of Christ, the Church, as the source of Aeneas' recovery. The Church is meant to be a therapeutic community in which Christ continues His healing work in our midst.

"Yesterday you were flung on a bed, exhausted and paralyzed, and you had no one to put you into the pool when the water should be troubled. Today you have Him, who is in one person God and Man. You were raised up from your bed, and even carried your bed, publicly acknowledging the benefit. Do not again be thrown on your bed by sinning, in the evil of a body paralyzed by its pleasures. As you now are, so walk, mindful of the command, '*See you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you*'" (Jn 5:14). If you prove yourself bad after the blessing you have received. You have heard the loud voice, '*Lazarus, come out!*'" (St Gregory the Theologian, Oration on Holy Baptism, XI, 33)

## Divine Liturgy Intentions

**Today +Naphie Samara.** Requested by Michael & Virginia Mischitelli and Antonio & Karen Solitro

+**Virginia Crilly.** Requested by Tom Syseskey

**May 10 +Wayne Kallio.** Requested by Joe and Lorraine Lian

+ **Mitchell Bollus.** Requested by Michael & Virginia Mischitelli and Antonio & Karen Solitro

**If you want me to remember someone at the Divine Liturgy, please send me an email at [olphmelkite@gmail.com](mailto:olphmelkite@gmail.com) or call the rectory.**

## MEMORY ETERNAL

Several other of our brothers and sisters have passed away in the last few weeks. Please remember them and their families in your prayers. They are: Mitchell Bollus, Nan Nejaimey, Naphie Samara, Aileen Abraham, and Wayne Kallio. It is hard for us when we can't comfort and pray with the families in person. When the pandemic is over, I plan to do a memorial service for all those who have passed away and whose funerals were done privately.

## REMINDER

**Thank-you to everyone who has continued to mail in their contributions to the parish. We still have expenses even though we can't gather together to worship. It costs approximately \$8,000 a month to operate the parish. We do not have income from Bingo to supplement your contributions. If you are not sending in your contributions and can do so, I would really appreciate it. I know that some of you may be suffering financial hardship as a result of the pandemic and I certainly understand that. I am continuing to look at a method for you to make payments online, if you prefer.**

**May God continue to bless us!**

## Consecration to the Mother of God

**Deacon:** Let us pray to the Lord.

**All:** Lord have mercy.

**Priest:** Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, you are the fairest fruit of God's redeeming love; you sing of the Father's mercy and accompany us with a mother's care. In this time of pandemic we come to you, our sign of sure hope and comfort.

**Priest:** With the love of a Mother and Handmaid, embrace our nation, our eparchy, and our parish, which we entrust and consecrate once again to you, together with ourselves and our families.

**All:** Most Holy Theotokos, save us.

**Priest:** Mary, Health of the Sick, sign of health, of healing, and of divine hope for the sick, we entrust to you all who are infected with the coronavirus.

**All:** Most Holy Theotokos, save us.

**Priest:** Mother of Consolation, who console with a mother's love all who turn to you, we entrust to you all those who have lost loved ones in the pandemic.

**All:** Most Holy Theotokos, save us.

**Priest:** Help of Christians, who comes to our rescue in every trial, we entrust to your loving protection all caregivers.

**All:** Most Holy Theotokos, save us.

**Priest:** Queen and Mother of Mercy, who embrace all those who call upon your help in their distress, we entrust to you all who are suffering in any way from the pandemic.

**All:** Most Holy Theotokos, save us.

**Priest:** Seat of Wisdom, who were so wonderfully filled with the light of truth, we entrust to you all who are working to find a cure to this pandemic.

**All:** Most Holy Theotokos, save us.

**Priest:** Mother of Good Counsel, who gave yourself wholeheartedly to God's plan for the renewing of all things in Christ, we entrust to you all leaders and policymakers. Accept, with the benevolence of a Mother, this act of consecration that we make today with confidence, and help us to be your Son's instruments for the healing and salvation of our country and the world.

**All:** Most Holy Theotokos, save us.

**Deacon:** Let us pray to the Lord.

**All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Priest:** Bestow the grace of your kindness upon your supplicant people, O Lord, that, formed by you, their creator, and restored by you, their sustainer, through your constant action they may be saved. For you are good and you love mankind, and we render glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and always, and forever and ever.

**All:** Amen.

## Paralyzed by Sins and Thoughtless Acts

THE SCRIPTURES READ on the remaining Sundays in the Paschal season present us with some of life's most debilitating hardships: blindness, isolation and, today, paralysis. In the passage from the Acts of the Apostles read today, we hear about the healing of a man named Aeneas in Lydda (Lod), some 23 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Aeneas, we are told, "*had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed*" (Acts 9:33).

In the Gospel reading which follows, we hear about another man "*who had an infirmity thirty-eight years*" (Jn 5:5) and who was healed by the Lord Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda (or Bethzatha) outside Jerusalem, where the infirm gathered, hoping for healing. This pool was used to clean the animals destined for sacrifice before they would be brought into the temple.

It is not clear why the sick gathered there. There was no explicit mention of miracles at this pool in Jewish sources of the day, such as Josephus or Philo. The pool itself, buried in the destruction of Jerusalem, was concealed until archeologists discovered it in the nineteenth century. This had led some to think that the passage was not historical at all. Rather, they suggested, it was meant to teach that the "angel in the water" foreshadowed the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in baptism, which heals us of sin (see Tertullian, *On Baptism*, chapter 5).

Others have noted that there were healing springs and pools in the ancient pagan world as well. Cures at those pools followed specific patterns like the one John records here: the first one entering the pool after the water was "stirred" would be healed. John affirms that Christ's word alone, without any ritual or procedure, was enough to heal. Like the paralytic, who had to stop relying on the pool for salvation and turn instead to Christ, so Israel had to stop relying upon the Law to save them and turn to Christ instead.

### What Does It Mean to be Paralyzed?

In the Early Church, commentators did not often speculate on the pool, or even on the nature of the man's illness. It was more common to compare the physical infirmity of the paralyzed man to the spiritual paralysis which afflicts Christians, either occasionally or in a regular way. It was often noted how, in the lives of each one of us, there will be spiritual paralysis: moments of weakness or failure, which can last for many years, as with the paralytic at the sheep pool.

In "spiritual paralysis," the energies of our soul, of our mind, of our heart, of our will, of our body itself are fettered – fettered by the fact that we have no courage and no power within us to move and to act to the full of our longings. We stand, year after year, on the very edge: on the bank of the pool that could give us life, without being able to enter it.

### Christian Life as Synergy

In one of the last New Testament books to reach its final form, the Second Epistle of St Peter, we see the Christian spiritual life addressed. Spiritual life, we read, comes "*...through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by whom have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that though these you may be partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Pt 1:; 3,4). The way to *theosis* – being partakers of the divine nature – comes because of Christ. God becomes incarnate so that we might become divinized.

### Trisagion

All of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia!

### Prokimenon

**Reader:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

**People:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

**Reader:** All you peoples, clap your hands! Shout to God with cries of gladness!

**People:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

**Reader:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise!

**People:** Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

### Epistle: Acts 1:12-14

#### Alleluia Verses

In You, O Lord, I have hoped: let me never be put to shame.

In Your justice, save me and deliver me, lend me Your ear and hasten my deliverance.

**Verse:** Be for me a protecting God, a sheltering house to save me..

### Gospel: John 19:25-27

#### Hirmos (Pascha)

The angel cried out to the One who is full of grace: "Hail, O immaculate Virgin!" Hail again, for Your Son is risen from the tomb on the third day. Shine, shine, O New Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has shone upon You. Rejoice and be glad, O Sion; and You, O Pure One, O Mother of God, exult in the resurrection of your Son

#### Kinonikon:

Receive the Body of Christ and drink from the Fountain of Immortality. Alleluia.

#### After Communion:

Christ is risen... (once)

#### After final blessing (3x)

**Priest:** Christ is risen!

**People:** He is truly risen!

**Priest:** Glory to His Holy Resurrection on the third day!

**People:** We adore His Holy Resurrection on the third day!