

St. Michael's Orthodox Christian Church

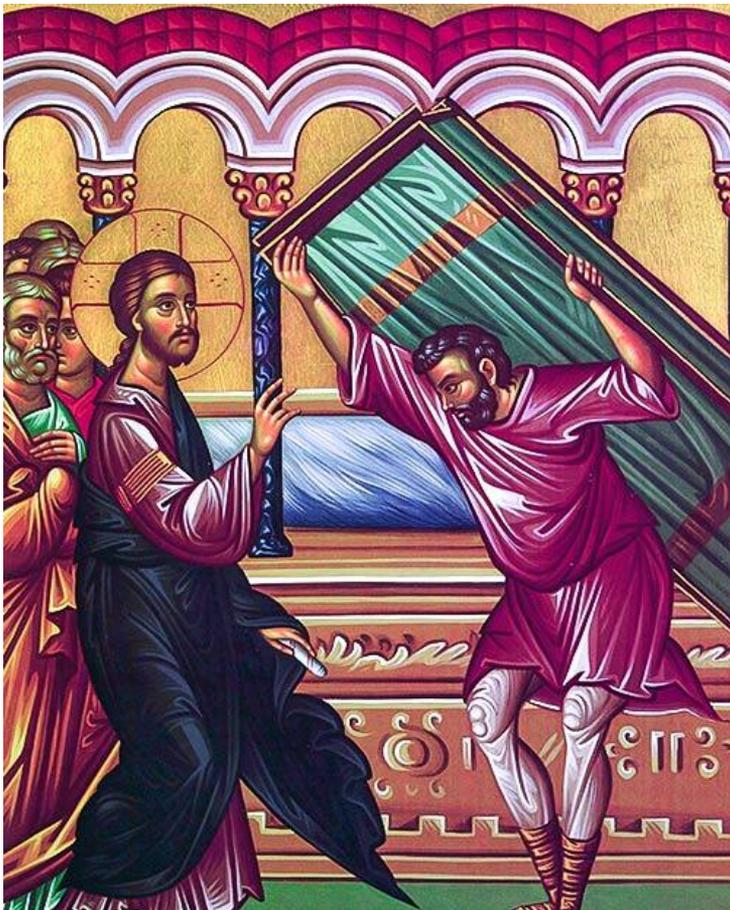
1182 Ashland St., Greensburg, PA 15601

*Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.*

- **His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH**, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America
 - **His Grace Bishop THOMAS**, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Middle Atlantic
 - **Archpriest John Nosal**, Pastor
-

Sunday of the Paralytic, May 19, 2019

*To all who are present with us this morning,
Christ is risen! Thank you for being here.*





The mission of the members of St. Michael's Orthodox Church is to become completely loving people.

(see Lk 10:27) This will occur by the Grace of God as we strive to live holy lives, using the tools He has given us for this endeavor: prayer, fasting, charitable works, and the constant remembrance of death.

TONE 3

Arr: Basil Kazan.

Let the hea - vens re-joice and the earth be glad;
For the Lord hath done a migh-ty act with His own arm;
He hath tram-pled down death by death, and be - came the first
born from the dead; He hath de - liv - ered us from the
depths of Ha - des, gran - ting the world the great mer - cy.

I.O.C.C. SYRIAN CHRISTIAN RELIEF

As the Syrian crisis continues, we continue to accept *donations* to do what we can to help ease the suffering there. Checks may be written to "St. Michael's" with the note "Syrian Relief." The following is a link to International Orthodox Christian Charities ((IOCC) "Response to the Crisis in Syria" page with more information on what you can do to help:

http://www.iocc.org/countries/countries_syria.aspx

Sunday, May 19, 2019

Tone: 3

Eothinon: 5

4th Sunday of Pascha. Sunday of the Paralytic. Hieromartyr Patrick, bishop of Prussa & the priest-martyrs Acacius, Menander and Polyaeus; Ven. Cornelios of Komelsk; Grand Prince Dimitry Donskoy of Moscow.

Greeting: Christ is risen!

Response: Indeed, He is risen!

THE EPISTLE READING

Acts of the Apostles (9:32-42)

I**N 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.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

According to St. John (5:1-15)

A**T 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 38 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 befalls you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus Who had healed him.

— **bishop THOMAS weekend** —

Friday, June 14 - 6:00 pm — ‘Working’ Dinner at church

Saturday, June 15 - 9 am — Bless the Animals; Brunch
6 pm — Vespers; children & families

Sunday, June 16 - 10 am — Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
Lunch with Bishop THOMAS

***Memorial Prayers will be prayed on Sunday, May 26th,
for the following people who have died during Mays past:***

CYNTHIA Abraham (5/3/1959), **JULIA** Slyman (5/3/1999),
ELSIE Asa (5/10/2003), **MEROPI** Papanastasiou (*Petros’ step-
mother; 5/11/88*), **ROBERT** Kalp (5/12/2001),
LOUISE Hamwey (5/15/2017), **WALTER** Orange (5/19/1994),
MARY Black (5/22/2011), **TIMOTHEA** Papanastasiou (*Petros’
mother; 5/23/42*), **TED** Despot (*Irene Papas’ brother; 5/23/2002*),
AUDREY Oross (5/24/1998), **LARRY** Charley (5/25/2000),
MARY Volchko (5/26/2008), **JOANNE** Abdalah (5/27/2008),
MICHAEL Asa (5/28/1996).

If you know of others who reposed during the month of May that you would like us to add to this list, call the church office with their names and the dates of their departure from this life.

If you have recently received a letter from St. Michael’s regarding the need to complete information for Archdiocesan Sacramental Forms, please return the completed forms to the office as soon as possible.

Any questions, please contact Debbie or Father John. Thank you.



“Paths of Righteousness”
Hike No. 2
Saturday
May 25, 2019

(For info, talk with Pete Papas or Fr. Sam.)

A SERMON BY...

Hieroschemamonk Ambrose (formerly Fr. Alexey) Young | 5/14/2011

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Christ is risen!

(John 5:1-15) Today is called the Sunday of the Paralytic in the Orthodox liturgical calendar. It is so called because of the Gospel appointed to be read today, John 5:1, which recounts the healing by our Lord Jesus Christ of a paralytic at the Sheep Pool, called Bethesda. (You have probably heard of a very famous hospital in Maryland, near Washington D.C., called "Bethesda" – and, if you didn't know before, now you know that it's called that because of the Gospel association of Bethesda with healing.) In 1988, Gerondissa and my late wife and two of our children were in Jerusalem and stood right at the side of the ruins of the Pool of Bethesda. It is located in a Muslim quarter of Jerusalem, just behind the beautiful crusader church of St. Anna, which stands next to the site of the house in which the parents of the Theotokos lived, and where the Virgin Mary was also born.

There is a back story here. As you know, in the first century the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and so, until the 19th century, there was no visible, above-ground evidence for this pool. As a result, skeptical biblical scholars decided that both the place and the and the story in the Gospel were fiction; this Gospel, they maintained (without any actual evidence, I may say) was actually written long after St. John's death and by someone who wasn't familiar with the layout and geography of Jerusalem in the time of Christ.

But then, however, archaeologists discovered the ruins under much rubble of a holding tank that exactly corresponds to the Pool of Bethesda in St. John's account! Further digging confirmed this. Of course this didn't stop the skeptics, who have continued to maintain their impious and even unscientific views of Scripture in general. But the ruins of the pool are there: and it has been verified by scientists to be the real McCoy; you can go there and pray and read the account of the healing of the paralytic on the spot where it happened!

It's also called the Sheep Pool, by the way, because this was the place where sheep that were to be sacrificed in the nearby Temple were washed and inspected to be sure that they were without blemish.

There were also five porches or porticos around the pool, and in the shelter of these marble porches great numbers of the sick and

diseased gathered, waiting for what was called “the troubling of the water.” What was this about, this “troubling of the water”? According to Jewish belief, once a year an angel would descend and stir up the waters, and the first person to get into the water when the angel did this, would be healed.

According to the Orthodox patristic tradition, there is more to this story. Our Holy Fathers teach us that when Adam was expelled from Eden he took with him two seeds from the Tree of Life. One of these seeds he planted in what was much later to become a suburb of Jerusalem. This seed grew into the tree that became the wood of the Cross, and this spot is marked today by an Orthodox monastery dedicated to the Holy Cross.

The other seed, however, was dropped accidentally by Adam, and the waters of a spring immediately came to the surface and hid it; in time this became what we call the Pool of Bethesda, or the Sheep Pool. And thus, each year, on the anniversary of Adam’s having dropped this seed there, an angel from heaven descended and stirred the water into a whirlpool, seeking the seed. But of course the action of a holy angel is filled with grace – grace so strong that it could heal someone of even a dire or terminal illness.

This is the “back story” to this Gospel account. (Of course modern bible scholars discount all of this because they discount anything that is miraculous.) And this “back story” has taken up most of my sermon this morning. But there is one other thing I need to point out before concluding, and that is this:

THE LORD’S HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC REMINDS US MOST FORCEFULLY THAT ALL OF US, TO ONE DEGREE OR ANOTHER, AND IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, ARE ALSO “PARALYZED” – NOT NECESSARILY PHYSICALLY, BUT SPIRITUALLY, AND SOMETIMES ALSO INTELLECTUALLY AND MENTALLY.

Let me explain. People who are not open to knowledge and learning and new ideas are intellectually paralyzed and, I’m afraid, this describes the majority of people in our society and culture today, including many of those who attend our very left-leaning and agnostic colleges and universities and are considered “educated.” These are people who have turned their backs on Christ, who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” and they have closed their minds to the miraculous and the Church which was established upon the faith of St. Peter and the other Apostles. And then there are those who are mental paralyzed – those suffering from mental illnesses and from advanced forms of dementia.

And finally, there are those who are us, we are spiritually paralyzed – and that describes the majority of us, we who make little or no effort to appeal to the Lord for healing of our spiritual illnesses and ailments. We who make little or no attempt to cooperate with the powerful grace and energy that God sends to us every day and which we turn away from; we who confess our sins and then turn right around and do them all over again, demonstrating our complete lack of repentance and determination to change.

WE SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN, OR DON'T BELIEVE, THAT THE LORD IS SOVEREIGN OVER ANY AND ALL DIFFICULTIES AND ILLNESSES. AND THIS GOSPEL ACCOUNT SHOWS THAT HE IS ALSO SOVEREIGN OVER SINS.

Remember, in this particular healing, Christ says that the man's paralysis is the result of his sins and that if he continues to sin, an even worse malady will come upon him. Now, not all physical illness is the result of sin, but this Gospel lets us know that some illness is!

However, brothers and sisters, we can know for sure that all spiritual illness is the result of sin. Sins that we repeatedly commit; sins with which we do even struggle; sins that we do not seek the Lord's strength to deal with; sins that we justify to ourselves and others – all of these plant a seed of spiritual disease that grows and increases all through our lives, becoming stronger and stronger, greater and greater in their size and ability to corrupt us... unless, that is, we finally humble down and seek the Lord's healing.

Of course, we can receive healing and grace and strength through the traditional channels of grace, which are the sacraments or Holy Mysteries of the Church – in particular worthily-received Holy Communion and sincere and frequent Confession. But we must never overlook the fact that our Lord can and often acts directly on the human soul. This direct contact between the Lord Jesus Christ and a troubled soul is often overlooked, underestimated, or ignored. But this contact, this healing, comes specifically through an active and mature prayer life and through a broken heart, a heart that realizes, finally, that it can do nothing for itself without Christ, as the Psalm says, "a broken and a contrite heart, God will not despise."

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Christ is risen!

HIGHLIGHTS of UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY, MAY 19 — *Shop with Scrip* order due

— Antiochian Women's Meeting (*usually on 1st Sunday*)

FRI., MAY 24, TO MON, MAY 27 — Family Camp - Antiochian Village

SATURDAY, MAY 25 — "Paths of Righteousness" Hike #2;

See Pete Papas for more info (412) 558-1246

TUESDAY, MAY 28 — Food on the Hill

TUESDAY, JUNE 4 — Braves vs. Pirates at PNC Park

FRIDAY, JUNE 14 TO PENTECOST SUNDAY, JUN 16 — Bp. THOMAS'
Annual Visit

SATURDAY, JUNE 15 — Blessing of the Animals

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, TO SUNDAY, JUNE 30 — Parish Life Conference
at Antiochian Village

SUNDAY, JULY 14 — Parish Picnic at Twin Lakes; Pavilion 1

MON, JULY 22 - SUN, JUL 28 — Archdiocese Convention, Grand Rapids

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 (*Great Feast of Nativity of the Theotokos*) —
- St. Michael's Mediterranean Buffet -

Please consider teaching in our church school (speak with Fotini) and singing in our choir (come on over on Sunday AM).

Secretary Debbie will NOT be in the office from May 17 thru June 3.

May 19 thru May 25

Sun., May 19 — The Paralytic

- 8:45 - ORTHROS
- 9:30 - Choir Rehearsal
- 10:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
 - Antiochian Women's Meeting

Tuesday, May 21

- 9:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
 - Constantine & Helena
- 7:00 PM - Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday, May 22

- 9:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
 - Mid-Pentecost
- 6:30 PM - VESPERS
 - (Deanery Meeting follows)

Thursday, May 23

- 9:00 AM - Ladies cooking

Saturday, May 25

- "Paths of Righteousness" - Hike #2;
 - (for info contact —
Pete Papas (412) 558-1246 or
Fr. Sam (724) 516-9390)
- **NO** Great Vespers

Thanks to our Blood Drive Team, led by Connie Capar, for hosting another successful effort to save lives by donating blood. Twenty-four people donated blood (one short of our Red-Cross-appointed goal) and were rewarded with food and fellowship by our Team. Thank you donors and volunteers.

Good job of singing last Sunday

to everyone who was here. Our growth in being able to sing the responses at our Divine Services in an uplifting manner was validated by Metropolitan HIEROTHEOS' comment about how much he enjoyed hearing the whole congregation sing together in praise of God. May we be inspired by his observation.

May 26 thru June 1

Sun., May 26 — The Samaritan Woman

- 8:45 - ORTHROS
- 9:30 - Choir Rehearsal
- 10:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
- 12:00 PM - Abortion Prayers

Fr. John will be out of town

from **Monday** thru **Friday**
May 27 thru **May 31.**

Tuesday, May 28

- 12:00 PM - Food on the Hill

Thursday, May 30

- 9:00 AM - Ladies cooking

Saturday, June 1

AT ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE —

- 8:00 AM - ORTHROS
- 9:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
 - with Ordination to the Priesthood of Dn. Christopher Shadid

AT ST. MICHAELS —

- 6:00 PM - GREAT VESPERS
-

The 2019 Parish Life Conference

at Antiochian Village is just around the corner. So who's got game? Who's willing to take a challenge on short notice to participate in the Conference in a way not done by us in a number of years?

We need three (or four) teens and three (or four) adults to step up to be our Bible Bowl teams for this year's competition.

Talk to Fr. John for details if you'd like to have some fun and get to know God a little better over the next few weeks.

(See the enclosed PLC schedule.)