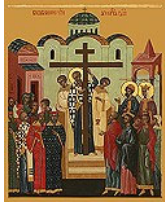


✠Bulletin✠

Week of May 11th to May 17th



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

4th SUNDAY OF PASCHA - Tone 3

Paralytic

**Holy Equals-to-the-Apostles Cyril (869) and Methodius (885), First
Teachers of the Slavs**

Holy Monastic Martyrs Olympia and Euphrosynē (13th c.). Commemoration of the Founding of Constantinople (330). Hieromartyr Mocius (Mucius), Presbyter, of Amphipolis in Macedonia (3rd-4th c.). Ven. Sophrony, Recluse, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—13th c.). St. Joseph, Metropolitan of Astrakhan (1671). St. Nikodemos, Archbishop of Serbia (1325).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday May 11, 2025

9:10 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Saturday May 17th

5:30 pm - Vespers

Weekly Schedule

Sunday May 11, 2025

- Inquirers & Catechism classes following Divine Liturgy
- Meeting of all Readers & those interested in reading

Sunday of the Paralytic

By St. John of Kronstadt

Today, the story from the Gospel of John was read about the healing by the word and command of Christ of a paralytic in Jerusalem, who was at the Sheep Gate pool.

There was “a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ The sick man answered Him, ‘Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, ‘It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.’ He answered them, ‘He who made me well said to me, Take up your bed and walk.’ Then they asked him, ‘Who is the Man who said to you, Take up your bed and walk?’ But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.’ The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well” (John 5:1–15).

This Gospel presents us with many instructive and moral things. The font or miraculous pool in Jerusalem represented the Christian baptismal font, in which not one, not two, but all those who are immersed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, receive healing from spiritual ailments, i.e. from sins, according to their faith or that of their godparents; and it is no longer the Angel of the Lord, but the Holy Spirit Himself, the Life-Giving Lord, who descends into the font and sanctifies the water and gives it the grace of renewal, revitalization, healing of spiritual and bodily ailments.

Who interceded and gave us this font of grace for rebirth, cleansing and sanctification? - Jesus Christ. Without this font, we would be eternally useless, unworthy not only of adoption by God, but also of the vision of God; for the Lord God is the purest Spirit and abhors all uncleanness of sin. Let us

all carefully preserve the spiritual garment of baptism, the garment of purity and incorruptibility and the betrothal of the Holy Spirit, which we were vouchsafed at baptism; and if we have already defiled this garment with various sins and passions, then let us take care to purify ourselves through sincere repentance and spend the rest of our lives in repentance and virtue and preparation for eternity; for we are all called by the Lord to holiness and righteousness (Eph. 5:9) and to eternal life.

The unfortunate paralytic had been ill for thirty-eight years, lying on his bed, and could not be healed because he was helpless and had no person who would immediately lower him into the pool after the water in it was disturbed by an angel; only the Lord, having compassion on him, immediately healed him, saying to him afterwards: "Behold, you are healed, sin no more, lest something worse happen to you." This paralytic depicts all mankind sick with sin, suffering from sinful paralysis for so many thousands of years. Christ God alone, the only righteous and holy one, Who offered Himself as a sacrifice for us to God the Father for our deliverance from sin, can heal us from sinful weaknesses, these forerunners of eternal death, to which unrepentant sinners will be subjected; but for our complete healing from sin, He requires only perfect repentance, which, although it is a matter of our free will, is at the same time the greatest gift of God's goodness to us.

Thus, paralyzed and depressed by sins, let us offer to God full, sincere repentance, proved and justified by good works, that we may be vouchsafed from Christ God health of soul and body, and most importantly – eternal well-being and blessedness in the future life, for which we are redeemed by the sufferings and death of the Son of God. Only warm, fervent repentance cleanses sins and gives our heart health, peace, tranquility, light, strength and power, boldness and joy. Only the font of tears heals us of the terrible, malignant disease of sin. Let us weep for our sins. God! grant us tears, cleansing the filth of our hearts, that we may please You with them. What forbids you to repent, to shed tears for your sins? These means of salvation are always with you, if only you have faith in Christ, hope in His mercy, and remain invincible to all your sins. There is no need to wait now for the water in the pool to be disturbed, and now there is no such pool, which in its time was an image of our baptismal font and the font of tears of repentance. Now you can be healed in your pool of tears every day and hour, as soon as you repent.

Our sweetest Savior Himself stands at the doors of your heart and knocks on them, so that you will open the doors to Him through your repentance: and

He will come to you and heal you and strengthen and comfort you. "Behold, I stand at the door," says the Lord, "and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20). Glory to You, our all-merciful Savior, every day and hour, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Happy Mother's Day!
God Grant you many blessed years!



**For our mothers who have
gone before us:
*Memory Eternal***

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

Reading/Chanting in the Church

For current readers and those interested in becoming readers in the church, we will have a short gathering after Divine Liturgy on Sunday to establish a reading schedule and reading practices in the Orthodox Church.

tithe.ly.com

Another way to "donate". This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, tithe.ly can be accessed through the church website www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

Prayer Requests

Carolyn – Robert & Debra's Forster's daughter
Anne and Scott Peatross
Annette Bartos – David Bartos' sister
Robert (John) Forster
Robert Kozera
Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos' daughter
Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,
Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,
Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,
Roman, Mykola
Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

Please let us know if there is anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
Variable Hymns and Readings

Priest: "Blessed is the Kingdom..."

Choir: "Amen."

Priest: "Christ is risen... " (2 ½ times)

Choir: "and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!"

(The Divine Liturgy is begun in this manner until the Leavetaking of Pascha.)

The First Antiphon (Psalm 66)

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth! Sing of His name, give glory to His praise!

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

Say to God, How awesome are Thy deeds! So great is Thy power that Thy enemies cringe before Thee! *(Refrain)*
Let all the earth worship Thee and praise Thee! Let is praise Thy name, O Most High! *(Refrain)*
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. *(Refrain)*

The Second Antiphon (Psalm 67)

God be bountiful to us and bless us! Show the light of Thy countenance upon us and have mercy on us!

Refrain: O Son of God who arose from the dead, save us to sing to Thee: Alleluia!

That we may know Thy way upon the earth, and Thy salvation among all nations! *(Refrain)*
Let all the people give thanks to Thee O God! Let all the people give thanks to Thee! *(Refrain)*
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God.....

Tone 3 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let the heavens rejoice!
Let the earth be glad!
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.
He has trampled down death by death.
He has become the first born of the dead.
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,
and has granted to the world//
great mercy.

Tone 3 Kontakion (Pentecostarion)

By Thy divine intercession, O Lord,
as Thou didst raise up the Paralytic of old,
so raise up my soul, paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts;
so that being saved I may sing to Thee://
"Glory to Thy power, O compassionate Christ!"

Tone 8 Kontakion (Pascha)

Thou didst descend into the tomb, O Immortal,
Thou didst destroy the power of death.
In victory didst Thou arise, O Christ God,
proclaiming, "Rejoice!" to the Myrrhbearing Women,//
granting peace to Thine Apostles, and bestowing Resurrection on the fallen.

Tone 1 Prokeimenon (Pentecostarion)

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us / as we have set our hope on Thee!
(Ps. 32:22)

V. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just!
(Ps. 32:1)

Acts 9:32-42 (Epistle)

Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

Tone 5

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation. (Ps. 88:1-2)

V. For Thou hast said: Mercy will be established forever; Thy truth will be prepared in the heavens. (Ps. 88:3)

John 5:1-15 (Gospel)

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made

well?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed." He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'" Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

1-4. After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. *There was a feast of the Jews - Pentecost, I believe.* The Lord *went up* on this feast for two reasons. First, to celebrate with the others lest His absence be interpreted as opposition to the law. Secondly, to use the occasion of the feast to draw more people to Himself by His signs and teaching, especially from among the guileless multitude, such as farmers and city craftsmen, who on other days were occupied with their work. The pool was called Sheep's Pool, because the sheep intended for sacrifice were gathered there, and after they were slain their entrails were washed in its water. It was the common belief that the washing of the sacrificial entrails imparted divine power to the water to work a miracle. Here divine providence is plainly evident, guiding the Jews of ancient times towards faith in Christ by preordaining this miracle of the pool. God intended in due time to bestow Baptism, the greatest of gifts, making it full of power to wash away sins and bring souls to life. Therefore, He prefigured Baptism in the Judaic practices of the Old Covenant by directing the Jews to use water for cleansing from defilement. This water did not cleanse the fundamental stain of sin. It merely granted them purification from the pollutions they

believe occurred on various occasions in the course of everyday life, such as contact with a leper or corpse. Similarly, God worked this miracle at the pool to prepare the Jews to receive the grace of Baptism. An angel would come down at certain times and trouble the waters and infuse it with healing power. Water itself had no power to heal - if it did it would heal everywhere on every occasion. This miracle was accomplished entirely by the activity and divine energy of the angel. Likewise, with us. In Baptism ordinary water by the divine invocations receives the grace of the Holy Spirit and cleanses us from spiritual disease. The water of Baptism heals all: the *blind*, whose spiritual eyes are darkened and cannot distinguish good from evil; the *lame*, who are paralyzed and neither practice virtue nor make any spiritual progress; and the *withered*, who are in complete despair, because of their inability to accomplish anything good. In former times, infirmity prevented many from being healed in the waters of the pool, and only one was made whole. But now, what hinders any man from being baptized? If the whole world approached at once for Baptism, its grace would not diminish.

5-7. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." The perseverance of the paralytic is astounding. For thirty-eight years he lay there waiting, each year hoping to be healed. But every time, those who were stronger and quicker got to the water before him. Yet he never despaired. The purpose of the Lord question - "Do you want to be made well?" was to reveal the paralytic's patient and steadfast endurance. What sick man would not want to be healed? And indeed, the paralytic answers gently and humbly: "Yea, Lord, I wish to be healed, but I have no man who is able to carry me into the water." He does not answer with blasphemy; he does not rebuke Christ for asking a stupid question; he does not curse the day of his birth as we often do, fainthearted as we are, when subject to a much slighter affliction than his. He answers meekly, having no idea to Whom he was speaking, but hoping Jesus would help him into the water. Note well that the Lord asked, "Do you want to be made well?" and not "Do you want Me to make you well?" lest He appear to boast.

8-10. Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed." He answered them, "He who

made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'" Jesus commands the paralytic to pick up his bed in order to confirm that the miracle was not an illusion. Unless his limbs were truly firmly and strong, the man would not have been able to carry his bed. The Lord did not require, as He did many others, of the paralytic to show faith before he was healed, for the paralytic had never seen Him work a sign. Whenever the Lord did require faith of those He was about to heal, He had already performed other miracles in their presence. See how the paralytic believed as soon as he heard Jesus' word. He did not hesitate and think, "Is he not mad! I have been here thirty-eight years without being made whole, and now all at once He commands me to stand." Instead, he believed - and rose to his feet. The Lord heals on the Sabbath to teach men to see the observances of the law in a new light: that they should not think that it is by bodily rest that they honor the Sabbath, but by refraining from evil. How could the law forbid one from doing good on the Sabbath when the law comes from God, Who is ceaseless in doing good?

11-13. He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'" Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. One must marvel at the man's boldness. The Jew's badgered him, saying, "It is not lawful for you to carry your bed on the Sabbath." But he boldly proclaimed his Benefactor: "*He that made me whole, the same said unto me,*... as if saying, "You have lost your mind and talk nonsense if you forbid me to obey the man who save me from such a long-drawn-out and grievous ailment." The Jews did not ask him, "Who is it that made you whole?" but "Who is it that *said unto you, Take up your bed, and walk?*" They blinded themselves to the miracle and were obsessed by what they considered a transgression of the Sabbath. Jesus "*conveyed Himself away*" for two reasons. First with the healer absent, the Jews would be more likely to believe the man's testimony, because it would seem that he was simply telling what happened and not attributing the miracle to Jesus. Second, the Lord withdrew so as not to provoke the Jews any further. He knew the mere sight of the object of envy is enough to ignite the flame of spite. He wanted the deed to be assessed calmly, on its own merit alone. And truly, the more the Jews accuse, interrogated, and examine, the more swiftly travels the work of the miracle.

14-15. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. The Lord's words to the paralytic, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no

more," confirm the truth of these two doctrines - illness in man stems from sin and the punishment in hell is eternal. No one can now say, "I fornicated only for one hour; my punishment cannot last forever." Behold this man, his years of sin were far fewer than the many years of his punishment, which lasted almost a lifetime. Sin is not judged by how long it took to commit, but by the gravity of the transgression. We also learn from the Lord's words that even though we have already paid a harsh penalty for sins, if we defile ourselves again with the same transgressions, we will be punished more severely than before – and rightly so. If a man does not correct his ways after his first punishment, it shows he is insensible and contemptuous and must be dealt with more harshly. But why are not all punished in this manner? Many of the wicked are healthy and energetic and seem to pass their days merrily. But this absence of suffering in the present becomes grounds for even greater punishment in the next life. Saint Paul confirms this: "But when we are judged by the Lord, we are chastened, meaning, in this life, so that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Cor. 11-32) that is, in the next life. The chastisement we receive in this life are mere admonitions; in the next life they are truly punishments.

So then, are all illnesses the result of sin? Not all, but most. The ailments of the paralytic, and of the man who suffered pain in his legs (as recorded in the Book of Kings [see III Kings 15:23]); were caused by sin. Other illnesses are given as a test or sign of God's approval, as with Job; whose virtue was revealed in his afflictions. Still others result in excess of various kinds, such as gluttony and drunkenness. Some have supposed that His words, "*Sin no more*," indicate the Lord's foreknowledge that the paralytic would reveal Him to the Jews after meeting Him in the temple. But this interpretation is incorrect. For the piety of the man was obvious from the very fact that the Evangelist says, "*Jesus found him in the temple*." Had he had not been pious, he would have run home to escape the intense interrogation of the Jews and given himself over to eating, drinking and relaxation. But none of these temptations kept him from the temple. When he recognizes Jesus, he gratefully proclaims Him to the Jews. Instead of trying to mollify them by saying, "It was Jesus Who told me to take up my bed," he confesses boldly, "It was Jesus Who made me whole." Such gratitude infuriated them, for they regarded healing on the Sabbath to be a violation of the law. Although the Jews subsequently persecuted the Lord, the man did not sin by revealing Him to Christ. If the Jews choose to persecute his benefactor, that was their sin.

Now we should understand the Sheep's pool to represent the grace filled waters of Baptism, in which the Lord Jesus – the Sheep sacrificed for us - was

washed on our behalf by John. This pool has five porches, symbolizing the four cardinal virtues, plus the divine contemplation of dogma, which are revealed in Baptism. Human nature was paralyzed in all its spiritual powers and lay sick for *thirty and eight years*. It was not sound in its faith in the Holy Trinity [three], nor did it believe firmly in the coming of the eighth age [eight], that is, the general Resurrection and the judgement of all who have ever lived. It could not be healed, for it had no man to put it in the pool: the Son of God, Who alone could heal our human nature by Baptism, was not yet made man. But when He became man, He healed our nature and commanded us to *take up our bed*. This means we must lift up from the earth our body - weighted down by flesh and earthly cares – and make it light and free. We must rouse it from slothfulness so that it can *walk*, that is to say, be active in doing good. The troubling of the water in the pool denotes the evil spirits stirred up in the waters of Baptism and then crushed and drowned by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Like the paralytic, we too are in need of healing, for we are paralyzed and inert in the doing good. We also have no man, that is, no rational thought proper to man, that would distinguish us from the irrational beasts and bring us to the pool of tears of repentance. In this pool, the first to enter is healed: if he procrastinates and does not swiftly repent, he obtains no healing. Be quick to enter, lest death overtake you. Again, there is an angel which troubles this pool of repentance - the Angel of Great Counsel of the Father, (See Is. 9:6) Christ the Savior. Unless the divine Word touches our heart and troubles it with thought of the torments of the age to come, this pool will not be made active by divine power and there will be no healing for the paralyzed soul. The pool of repentance may rightly be called a Sheep's pool: the pool in which the inward parts and thoughts of the saints, like the sheep's entrails, are washed. Cleansed in it, that is rendered innocent and guileless, the saints are made ready to become a living sacrifice pleasing to God. May we also obtain healing, and afterwards may the Lord ever find us in the temple, unstained by evil thoughts, "*lest a worse thing*," the eternal punishment, "*come unto us*."

Paschal Hymn to the Theotokos

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace:

“Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say: Rejoice,
your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb!
With Himself He has raised all the dead.”
Rejoice, O ye people!

Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem!

The glory of the Lord has shone on you.

Exult now, and be glad, O Zion!

Be radiant, O pure Theotokos,
in the Resurrection of your Son!

Communion Hymn

Receive the Body of Christ; taste the fountain of immortality!

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise thy God, O Zion! (*Ps. 147:1*)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*At the Dismissal, the Priest says: “Glory to Thee, O Christ...” and the choir
sings “Christ is risen from the dead...” (thrice).*

And unto us He has given eternal life.

Let us worship His Resurrection on the third day!