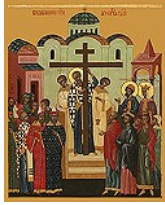


✠Bulletin✠

Week of May 25th to May 31st



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

6th SUNDAY OF PASCHA - Tone 5

Blind Man

Icon of the Mother of God "of the Passion". Third Finding of the Honorable Head of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John (ca. 850).

Hieromartyr Therapon, Bishop of Cyprus (14th c.). Hieromartyr Urban, Pope of Rome (230).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday May 25, 2025

9:10 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Wednesday May 28th – Ascension

5:30 pm – Vespers with Litya

Thursday May 29th – Ascension

9:00 am – Divine Liturgy

Weekly Schedule

Sunday May 25, 2025

- Inquirers & Catechism classes following Divine Liturgy
- Choir Practice

The Man Born Blind by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

Before his meeting with Christ the blind man had never seen anything. Everything was dark, he had to guess at things, to explore them by touch, to use his imagination. He had no clear authentic image of things. Then he met Christ, and Christ opened his eyes. And what was the first thing this man saw? The face of Christ, His gaze; the face of God become man, the divine gaze full of attentive, compassionate love resting on him, on him alone out of the whole crowd. Straight away he came face to face with the living God and encountered the miracle which so astonishes us: that God can focus His attention on each one of us — as on the lost sheep — and not see the crowd but see the one and only person. After that the man probably surveyed everything around him, and what he had known by description, by hearsay, became reality — "now I see".

It happens at the present time also; it can happen to each one of us. Like the man born blind we live most of our lives on alms, we sit like beggars at the roadside holding out a hand in the hope that someone will notice, if not us at least our hand, and give us something to sustain us for the next few hours at any rate. Such sustenance comes for us in the form of a friendly gaze resting upon us, a word spoken to us, a kindness done to us. But all this still leaves us by the roadside, blind and begging for help.

When Christ was passing another blind man, Bartimeus, that one did not wait for the Savior to come up to him and ask him if he wanted to be saved, if he wanted his sight. As soon as he sensed that something unusual was happening in the noisy crowd, and in answer to his question was told who was passing by, he began to shout for help. True, people tried to stop him; true, a slight doubt may have crept into his mind, was it worth shouting, calling for help, would the Lord hear, would he respond to such a trifling need as his? He went on clamoring for help because his suffering was so great, his need was so desperate. He was prepared to push past the people, fight his way through the crowd in order to reach God and be heard by Him.

If only we could realize how blind we are. If only we could realize that our knowledge of life, not only eternal, divine life, but earthly life, depends almost entirely on hearsay, that the life around us is dim and ghostly because we are blind, or (like the other blind man in the Gospel, not immediately cured by Christ) see things in a mist. If only we could remember what the Savior tells us about the beauty and the glory of both eternal and earthly life and not be

satisfied with our blindness, how earnestly would we try to detain Christ, so that He might pierce us with His gaze and speak His sovereign, healing, life-giving word to us. Then indeed we might see the astonishing beauty of Christ's face, the fathomless beauty of the divine gaze resting upon us with mercy and compassion and tenderness. We use our eyes so easily, but we see little, and that superficially. Let us seek the vision that can be ours only, when our hearts become bright and pure. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God; and in the brilliance of God's presence we might see each other, each one either illuminated by God's love, shining with the glory of eternal life, or else wounded, darkened, expecting from us not just alms but the surrender of our whole life through love in order that he might receive sight, that to him also the Kingdom of Heaven might already be revealed on earth.

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.

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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.

**God grant you many years,
Michele & Dennis**



On your 50th Anniversary!

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 us 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 5 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,
born for our salvation from the Virgin;
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,
to endure death,
and to raise the dead//
by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 4 Troparion *(Forerunner)*

Your head was revealed to us by Christ
as a divine treasure in the earth, O Prophet and Forerunner.
We gather in honor of this discovery
with inspired hymns of praise to the Savior//
Who saves us from corruption through your prayers.

Tone 6 Kontakion *(Forerunner)*

The shining pillar on earth, the Forerunner,
lamp of the Spiritual Sun, has revealed his radiant, holy head to the ends of
the earth.
He sanctifies those who venerate it and who faithfully cry://
“Wise Baptist of Christ, save us all!”

Tone 4 Kontakion *(Pentecostarion)*

I come to Thee, O Christ, blind from birth in my spiritual eyes,
and call to Thee in repentance//
“Thou art the most radiant Light of those in darkness.”

Tone 8 Prokeimenon *(Pentecostarion)*

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God! *(Ps. 75:10a)*

V. In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel. (Ps. 75:1)

Tone 7 Prokeimenon *(Forerunner)*

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord / and shall hope in Him.
(Ps. 63:11a)

Acts 16:16-34 (Epistle)

Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.” Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

2 Corinthians 4:6-15 (Epistle, Forerunner)

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Tone 4

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. Look upon me and have mercy on me! (Ps.118:132a)

*V. Guide my steps according to Thy word!
(Ps. 118:133a)*

Tone 5

*V. Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.
(Ps. 96:12)*

John 9:1-38 (Gospel)

Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing. Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?" Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him." He said, "I am he." Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" He answered

and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight." Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know." They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see." Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from." The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

Matthew 11:2-15 (*Gospel, Forerunner*)

And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me." As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.' Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading

By Blessed Theophylact
Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

6-7. When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing. When He had thus spoken-Jesus did not stop with words, but at once added the deed- He spat on the ground, and having made clay, He anointed the eyes of the blind man. By using the clay, the Lord showed that it was He Who formed Adam out of clay. Earlier He announced, in so many words, "I am He Who formed Adam," offending His listeners; now He demonstrates with an irrefutable deed the truth of that proclamation. Jesus created eyes for the blind man out of clay, just as He had done for Adam. He did not merely fashion the eyes, or open them, but gave them vision. This proves that it was He Who breathed the soul into Adam. Without the soul being present to impart its divine energy, even a perfectly formed eye would see nothing. Christ used spittle to make him see, because He was about to send the blind man to the pool of Siloam and

wanted to make clear that He, not the water of that spring, was the source of the miracle. Let us learn that He fashioned and opened the man's eyes by the power which proceeds from His mouth; this is why He spat on the ground to make clay. Then, lest anyone imagine that the source of the miracle was the earth, He ordered the man to wash off the clay. Some say that the clay was not removed but was fashioned into eyes. Why does He command him to go to the pool of Siloam? First, that we may learn of the blind man's faith and obedience. He did not reason, "If the clay and the spittle will give me eyes, why must I wash in the pool of Siloam?" but obeyed the One Who commanded. Second, with this order the Lord confounds the Jews who willfully rejected Him. It is likely that many saw Him anoint the man's eyes with clay and paid close attention to what He was doing. As a result, no one could later dispute that the Lord had done these things. Third, by sending the blind man to the pool of Siloam, Christ shows that He is not an opponent of the Old Testament. And why does the Evangelist add the interpretation of the word "Siloam"?* So that you might learn that the pool of Siloam is a figure of Christ, and that it was Christ Who healed the man there. Just as Christ is the spiritual rock, so is He the spiritual Siloam. As the gush of the spring of Siloam was fearful in its strength, so too the advent of the Lord, hidden and unknown to the angels, overwhelmed all sin by its power.

* The Lord repeatedly declares: "The Father *hath sent Me* (Mt. 10:40; Mk.9:37; Lk. 10:16; Jn. 5:36-37; etc.)" And Paul writes: "*For our fathers drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ* (I Cor. 10:4)."

12-16. Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know." They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. After the Lord had healed or worked some other miracle, He would withdraw from that place to avoid ostentation. This is why the Jews ask the blind man, *Where is He?* He answers, *I know not*, for he is always truthful. *They brought him to the Pharisees* for closer and harsher questioning. The Evangelist emphasizes that *it was the Sabbath day* in order to reveal their evil intent as they grasp for allegations to make against Christ. By accusing the Lord of breaking the Sabbath, they hoped to divert attention from the miracle. They demand, "How did He open

your eyes?" rather than simply asking, "How did you receive your sight?" compelling the blind man to admit that Jesus had made clay on the Sabbath. For they continuously accused the Lord of violating the Sabbath. But because he had already given this information to the people who were listening to him, he does not mention Jesus' name, nor what the Lord said to him. He explains merely, *He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see*. It is likely that the people who brought the blind man had slandered the Lord by telling the Pharisees, "Look what Jesus is doing on the Sabbath." Note the blind man's boldness when speaking with the Pharisees. The Jews brought him to the Pharisees so that he would become frightened and deny the healing. But he cries out, "I do see!" *Therefore said some of the Pharisees*, not all of them, but the most insolent, *This man is not of God*. But *others said*, *How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?* Behold how the attitude of many of them softens as a result of the miracles. They are Pharisees and rulers, yet they begin to be won over by this sign and to take Christ's side, so that *there was a division among them*. The division appeared earlier in the crowd, when some of the people said, *He deceiveth the people*, while others said, *He is a good man* [see Jn. 7:12, 43]. Now the division arises between the rulers, and many Pharisees take issue with their fellows and speak in Christ's defense. But although they took His side, they did so weakly, and without conviction. Hear what they say: "*How can a man that is a sinner do such things?*" See how feeble is their resistance, how cunning His accusers! Rather than say, "This man is not of God because He heals on the Sabbath," the crafty Pharisees object, *He keepeth not the Sabbath day*. Not once do they mention the good deed, but only the violation of the Sabbath. Note this as well: the rulers are more reluctant than the people to admit the good Christ did. From the start a difference of opinion is evident among the common folk, with many supporting Christ. Only later did this praiseworthy division appear among the rulers. I call it "praiseworthy," because there are good separations and justifiable schisms. The Lord says, "I came to send a *sword* on the earth [see Mt. 10:34]." The *sword* means the salutary divergence of opinion that may arise when true reverence for God is at stake.

30-33. The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." "You Jews reject the One Who healed me," he says, "because you *know not from whence He is*. But the

very fact that He is not among those you deem illustrious makes it even more, remarkable that He can do such things. Clearly, He has some greater power and needs no help from man." Then the blind man answers those who had said earlier, *How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles* [v. 16]? turning their own words against them: "*We all know*," he says, "*that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth*." Note that he not only declares the Lord to be free of sin, but indicates that He is highly pleasing to God and that all that He does is of God, by saying, *If any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth*. Knowing well that the Pharisees were intent on covering up the miracle, the blind man, with full understanding, proclaims the beneficent deed: "*If He were not of God*, He could not have worked such a miracle, unlike any other since the world began." Others had opened the eyes of those who had lost their sight because of disease, but never of someone blind from birth. What occurred here is without precedent. Clearly, the worker of this miracle has greater power than any man. Some, applying cold and formal logic, have expressed this doubt: "How can the blind man say that *God heareth not sinners*? As the Lover of man, God most certainly hears those who pray that their sins be forgiven." It is unnecessary to respond to this, except to point out that the words *God heareth not sinners* mean that God does not grant sinners the power to work miracles; for the Spirit of God does not *dwell in a body that is subject unto sin* [Wis. 1:4]. But God does hear the prayers of those who with heartfelt repentance ask forgiveness of their sins: He hears them as penitents, not as sinners. As soon as they ask forgiveness, they move from the rank of sinners to that of penitents. It is, therefore, certainly true that *God heareth not sinners*; neither does He give to sinners the grace to work miracles. When unrepentant sinners ask Him for this power, they are grasping for something that does not belong to them. How could God heed those whom He rejects? Consider how the blind man said, *If any man be a worshipper of God*, then added, *and doeth His will*. Many are God-fearing, but fail to do the will of God. One must fear God and do His will. Both faith and works are necessary; or, as Paul says, faith and a good conscience [see 1 Tim.1:5]; or, to express it in the most exalted terms, divine vision and active virtue. Faith truly comes alive only when accompanied by God-pleasing deeds. These foster a good conscience, just as wicked deeds an evil conscience. Likewise, works are enlivened by faith. Apart from one another, both are dead. As it is written in another place, *Faith without works is dead* [Jas. 2:20]-and so are works without faith. Behold how truth bestows on a beggar, unused to public debate, the power to confess Christ boldly and to rebuke the high and mighty among the Jews! Great is the power of truth; so restricted and feeble is falsehood.

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

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*
The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil
tidings! *(Ps. 111:6)*
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!