

CROSSROADS

Sunday's Scriptures:

Epistle:

Acts 16:16-34

Gospel:

John 9:1-38)

+

Wednesday, May 20 – 7 PM:
Vespertal Liturgy for the Ascension

Thursday, May 21 – 7 PM on ZOOM – *Bible Study: The Resurrection Account in the Gospel of John - Part 2*

+

Sunday, May 31, Pentecost, the liturgical affirmation of our Inquirers.

St. Ephrem & the Man Born Blind

by Fr. Ted Bobosh



The Gospel of the healing of the man born blind (John 9) is in our Orthodox Church read as one of the Post-Paschal Sunday lessons. Like many of the Gospel Lessons in this period of the **Pentecostarion**, it is related to the theme of baptism – the lesson begins with a discussion of sin, the blind man then washes in the pool of Siloam and he is healed, and he comes to a full faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

Since the man was born blind, his sight is not being restored, but rather he is being given the gift of sight for the first time in his life. Some of the Patristic writers in the Syrian tradition interpreted this to mean that a new act of creation was done by Christ – where something before did not exist, now new eyes exist. St. Ephrem of Syria “understands that the blind man healed in John 9:6 had been born without any pupils. The miracle is thus not just of healing, but constitutes an act of creation...” (Sebastian Brock). As baptism bestows upon us the grace of new creation, so the blind man experiences being created anew through his encounter with Christ. St. Ephrem writes in one of his poems:

“He has renewed the heaven, because foolish men
Had worshipped all kinds of stars; He has renewed the earth
Which had grown old in Adam. With his spittle
There took place a novel fashioning:
He who is capable of all things puts aright both bodies and
minds.”

The theme of the new creation is an idea we find in the New Testament, an idea which grew in Christianity as the work of Christ was considered. For the Christian tradition in the Orthodox East understood Christ the Word of God to be the one who created the world in the beginning (Psalm 33:6 – “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made...”), and by His presence on earth as Jesus Christ to be renewing that fallen creation.

Christians participate in the new creation through their own baptisms. St. Ephrem continues:

“He is the Creator’s Son, whose treasure stores are filled
With every benefit. Let the one
who needs eyes come to Him.
He will make clay and transform it.
He will make flesh. He will enlighten eyes.
With a little clay He showed that by His hand
our dust was formed. The soul of the dead man
also witnessed that the human soul
was breathed in by Him. By these latter witnesses
He is believed to be the Son of God, the First One. (*Hymns on the Nativity*, #17).

As Sebastian Brock writes:

“Ephrem along with several other early commentators, understood that the man whose sight was healed in John 9 had been born without pupils, thus making it a miracle involving creation, rather than just healing. In saying this Ephrem interprets the story of the Blind Man (John 9:6) in relation to Genesis 2:7:

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being”.

The healing shows that Christ is the same One Who created the first human being” (p 57).

Just as the Word of God created the first human from the dust of the earth, so Jesus the incarnate Word takes the dust of the fallen creation, mixes it with His spittle and anoints the eyes of the man born blind, creating for him new pupils so that for the first time the man born blind could see.

And he who was seated on the throne said,

“Behold, I am making all things new.”
(Revelation 21:5)



“TARGETING” the Needs of Moms and Babies in May

There are only **3 weekends left** to participate in our **Target** gift card collection! Please consider picking up a Target gift card or two, and place them in the display board in the church vestibule.

The importance of these gift cards cannot be overestimated. Your donation may help a young mom purchase necessary baby items like diapers, formula, and baby food! And, for the expectant mom who may be at a crossroads, knowing that places like *Options for Her* are there to help may help her CHOOSE LIFE for her unborn child. So please, be generous!

Your Inreach/Outreach Ministry thanks you.

GREAT NEWS FOR PREGNANT and NEW MOMS!

Mother’s Day saw the launching of [Moms.gov](https://www.moms.gov), a new federal resource that provides expecting and new mothers with access to practical information and life-affirming support services, including pregnancy centers, Federally Qualified Health Centers, nutritional guidance, breastfeeding resources, mental health support, adoption information, and other assistance programs, all in one place! This resource is designed to support women, children, and families through pregnancy, childbirth, and early parenting. Also, the website’s inclusion of information about pregnancy centers highlights the important role these centers play in offering women material assistance, parenting education, emotional support, and referrals for healthcare and social services. So if you happen to know a mom who’s looking for information, share [Moms.gov](https://www.moms.gov) with her today!

+

JUNE 7, During Coffee Hour: TASHICKA HAYS, *Crossroads* Program Director

Crossroads in Willingboro, NJ is a remarkable nonprofit which provides solutions for disadvantaged youth. When children and teens are faced with unexpected challenges very early in life (abuse, displacement, instability) and have no support system, ***Crossroads*** bridges that gap. Enduring such negative experiences places youths at a higher risk for unemployment, poor educational outcomes, health issues, early parenthood, long-term dependency on public assistance, increased rates of incarceration, and homelessness. **We are eager to support *Crossroads* with a clothing and bedding drive throughout June.** They take clothing (all sizes) and bedding such as twin sized sheets and pillowcases. Collection bins will be placed in the vestibule. (All items must be new.)

Your Inreach/Outreach Ministry and *Crossroads* appreciate your support!

Spaghetti and Meatball Dinner



(includes salad and dessert)

Date: May 30 (Saturday)

Time: 5:00 - 8:00 PM (final seating at 7:30 PM)

Place: Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

11 Wilkins Station Rd, Medford NJ 08055

Prices: Adults - \$20.00

Children 10 years and under - \$10.00

Children under 5 years - no charge

Takeout is available ❖❖ Walk-ins Welcome

Please see Barbara Mosser or Carol Ann Curry for reservations, or

RSVP via email to ochctickets@gmail.com or

text/call Phyllis at (609) 315-1258

RSVP by May 27

If you are unable to attend, donations are welcomed and appreciated!

Also happening 5:00 - 8:00 PM our

❖❖ 50/50 Raffle! ❖❖

❖❖❖❖❖❖❖

❖❖ Church Boutique selling Icons and Jewelry ❖❖

❖❖❖❖❖❖❖

**During Coffee Hour, Sunday, June 14:
The Sunday of All the Saints of North America**



“**Sacred Alaska**” is an award-winning documentary that offers an intimate look into Native Alaskan culture and spirituality. It showcases the profound influence of Orthodoxy, introduced by Russian monks in the late 18th century, on Alaskan society.

The film highlights the unique way Alaskas have woven their indigenous beliefs with Orthodox traditions, deeply influencing their worldview. Central to this is the concept of learning to become a “real person.” Through beautiful cinematography and powerful storytelling, “**Sacred Alaska**” underscores the profound, sacred bond between the Alaskan people, their faith, and the formidable landscape they call home.

The last Atrium Class will be on Sunday, May 24!



Parent Pages

Preparing the environment of the Domestic Church*

* The term "Domestic Church" refers to the family, the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. Though recovered only recently, the term dates back to the first century AD. The Greek word *ecclesiola* referred to "little church." The early Church understood that the home was fertile ground for discipleship, sanctification, and holiness.

The Risen Life of Jesus

DEATH AND RESURRECTION

"Why did Jesus have to die?" This question is one which is often voiced by young children and, also, by the not-so-young. Perhaps you have the following answer in your mind: "He died so He could save us from our sins." We find this truth proclaimed by St. Paul in 1st Corinthians 15:3 and what a great gift that is! But have you taken the time to ask the further question of "Why?" Why would He do such a thing? This is the question of the elementary aged child, and it is a question worth reflecting on. Perhaps these responses of the children will help you in your pondering!

- 4-year-old at the City of Jerusalem material: "Why would the people say Jesus should die?" After a brief pause, she continued: "Oh, I know! So he could be risen. Jesus died and then he had a lot of risen light!"
- 5-year-old, having just heard the account of the Resurrection from the Gospel of Matthew: "He's not here! That's because he is the Good Shepherd and he wants to be with us, his sheep, always!"
- 11-year-old at the Prayer Table: "Jesus died and brought life for all of us."



As the children of the Atrium, from the very youngest age to the older elementary age, have shared, Jesus died so that he might rise and share his risen life with us. What great, great love he must have for each of us and for all of us. How blessed we are to have been invited to share in his risen life, a life stronger than death, a light stronger than darkness. Alleluia, Praise the Lord!

JESUS' RISEN LIFE AND LIGHT, SHARED WITH US IN THE EUCHARIST

In the Church we continue to be nourished by the best food and best drink, the Body and Blood of the Good Shepherd who is truly present with us in the Eucharist. One of the Atrium materials particularly enjoyed by the 3-6 and 6-9 children is called the Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd. In this material we ponder the connection between the Scriptural parable of the Good Shepherd who gives all of himself to his sheep and the liturgical celebration of this reality in which we, his sheep, are fed by the very best food and drink when we are fed by the Eucharist and, thus, receive and grow in the Risen Life of Jesus, our Good Shepherd. Often, adults are surprised to hear that it is the Risen Life of Christ that we receive and enjoy in the Eucharist. And yet for the children, this is a truth that has resonated from the earliest days of their time in the Atrium. This intrinsic connection between Scripture and



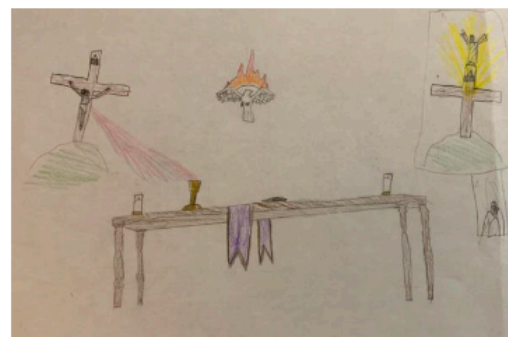
Liturgy, Resurrection and Eucharist, can be seen in a very particular way through their artwork. Here are a few examples of "Alleluias" decorated just before the beginning of the Lenten season. It is beautiful to see the synthesis in these illustrations (just two of many similar pieces of art) which reveals the deep truth of the Eucharist recognized by children and, we hope, by adults as well!



CELEBRATING THE RESURRECTION THROUGH THE EUCHARIST

Each Sunday we are invited to gather and be fed by the Risen Life of Jesus. How can we keep this truth in the forefront of our minds and hearts? In what way can each Sunday be a celebration of His Resurrection, particularly during the fifty days of the Easter season?

- Look for signs of new life during this season of spring. In what way could these creation signs remind you, throughout your day, of the eternal Risen Life shared with us by Jesus?
- Sing an Alleluia song each day of Easter to praise God for his goodness! Collect Alleluia songs, building your family's musical treasury!
- Take time each Sunday to ponder together what eternal life will be like, developing a joy in and longing for that day that is yet to come.
- When you receive the Eucharist, recall that Jesus is sharing with you his Risen Life and Light, a Life stronger than death and a Light stronger than any darkness. Truly, he is so good to us!



Some Ways to Support our Parish

Here are some ways that this can be done:

- 1) **Cash** (If an annual record of this donation is desired then it should be put in an envelope with your name on it, so that a record can be kept and a receipt eventually will be prepared and available).
- 2) **Monthly Envelopes** can be sent to your home (see Fr. John if you would like to donate this way).
- 3) **A Check** can be made out to the church and given in the donation basket or left in the church office.
- 4) **Having a check sent directly from your bank account to the church** (in the same way that bills can be paid on your computer through your bank).

Address the check to:

Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross
Box 805
Medford, NJ 08055

- 5) **Using our online app, tithe.ly** – Please note that there is a 3% processing fee - this can be added to the donation or it will be subtracted from the donation):

- 1) You can use the **QR Code** at our website: <https://holycrossmedford.org/>



- 2) Go to: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/1197928

- 3) TEXT the word, **“Give” to: 1-833-854-9049**

+

SHOP RITE COUPONS

Cards are available in denominations of \$100, \$50, \$25, and \$20.

Shop-Rite sells the cards in bulk to us at a 5% discount. The gift cards are available from **Larry Skvir** every Sunday at coffee hour. If you regularly shop at Shop-Rite and don't use the gift cards, please consider purchasing them in 2026.