



## Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 7—13 May, 2023

### CHRISTOS ANESTI ! CHRIST IS ARISEN!

<b>SUNDAY 7 MAY</b>	<b>Sunday of the Paralytic, John 5: 1-15</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>2023 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES - 2023</b> (A free voluntary program organised by the Church) <b>Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at 10.30am until Church dismissal.</b> We have classes for ages ranging from 5yrs to teenage years. Lessons are taught in a relaxed, friendly environment. Please bring your children along to learn of their rich Orthodox faith and come close to God and His Love.	
<b>MONDAY 8 MAY</b> <i>St John the Theologian and Evangelist</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li><li>• <b>10.00am</b> Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall</li></ul>
<b>WEDNESDAY 10 MAY</b> <i>Mid-Pentecost</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li><li>• <b>5.00pm</b> Paraklesis to the Theotokos</li></ul>
<b>THURSDAY 11 MAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>8.00—9.00pm</b> ➡ <b>TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP 2023</b> <b>ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME</b> Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment. * In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church</li></ul>
<b>SUNDAY 14 MAY</b>	<b>GOSPEL READING: John 4: 5-42</b> <b>EPISTLE READING: Acts 11: 19-30</b>

### Telephone Contact Numbers

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Fr Athanasios and  
Fr Ephraim are available  
at the Church every  
Monday to Friday  
between 4.00 and 6.00pm  
for Holy Confession and  
any spiritual need.

### Mid-Pentecost

The feast of Mid-Pentecost falls halfway between Pascha and Pentecost. It is a service of anticipation. The hymns of the service focus much less on Pascha and the Resurrection as they do on the coming of the Holy Spirit. Although Pascha is the Feast of Feasts, Pentecost is the celebration of our full participation in the Mystery of the resurrected Life. The main metaphor used throughout the feast of Mid-Pentecost is water.

*When Mid-feast was come, Jesus went up into the temple and taught the disobedient people, saying: He that thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink living and everlasting water, and he shall never thirst unto eternity. He that believes in Me, rivers shall flow from his innermost being, and he shall have the Light of Life.*

For all that Christ accomplished for our salvation at Pascha, it remains still for us to receive it. And for us to receive the resurrected Life, we have to thirst for it. All of the blessings and gifts and graces of heaven are ours through Christ, but God will not force them on us. God will only give us the heavenly gifts if we thirst for them.

This is probably the reason why Jesus usually asked someone if they wanted to be healed. It seems strange to us that Jesus would ask someone who had been sick a long time whether or not they wanted to be healed. But keep in mind, all physical healings and miracles are signs. Miracles are never an end in themselves. Miracles in the physical world that we can easily see are signs pointing us to spiritual realities that we cannot easily see. Last

Sunday, Jesus asked the man lame for 38 years if he wanted to be healed. Today at the feast of Mid-Pentecost, Jesus is asking us if we are thirsty, thirsty for the Light of Life.

And so this is the question we must all ask ourselves: Do we really want to be saved? Do we thirst for heavenly Life? Are we sick and tired of being spiritually blind and lame, of running into the same spiritual walls, same besetting sins, same failures again and again? Are we ready to humble ourselves and confess our need, to cry out to God: "I have sinned, have mercy on me"? If we are willing, we are ready for Pentecost.

The Gospel reading for Mid-Pentecost comes from John 7, which contains the readings for both Mid-Pentecost and Pentecost. At verse 17, which we read today, Jesus says,

*"If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the teaching, whether it is from God."*

In the world, we want to know first and then decide. We gather all of the information about something, and then we make a decision. However, that is not how things work in our relationship with God. With God, first we decide, first we will to do His will; then we know, then we understand. For many of us, this is very difficult. It's hard to trust as a little child.

But this is why hunger and thirst are such useful metaphors. When you are hungry enough. When you are thirsty enough. When you are fully convinced of your own inability to take up the bed of your lazy, sinful and broken life and walk in the Light of the Resurrection, then, like the Blind Man (John 9: 7), you are ready and willing to do what you are told. Then you are ready to do God's will—whatever it is. And in doing, you begin to know; just as the blind man in obeying began to see.

Fr. Michael Gillis



### **THE SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC: A CALL TO CHANGE FROM WITHIN**

Deep joy and heartfelt jubilation fill us as we read about Christ's miracles in the Gospel. These readings convey His infinite power, providential care, and ultimate love for all men. But they also teach us important life lessons. So let us take a closer look today at the narration about the paralytic.

He had been ill for a long time. For thirty-eight years, he had been lying at Sheep's pool with the other invalids. Three words in the Gospel described their condition: blind, lame and paralysed. But do not all of these descriptions equally apply to us? Are we not blind because we cannot see? Are we not deaf because we cannot hear His word? Are we not paralysed, because we have no energy to live? The invalids were hoping for a splash. They waited for someone to come and put them in the pool. They were all in the expectation of some external event that would change their lives.

In our lives on this earth, the lobby of Heaven, are we not like these invalids at the pool? Are we not waiting like them for an Angel of God to perform a miracle that will make us see, hear and live?

Miracles do happen. Some people come out of the baptismal font renewed and reborn. They partake of the Sacraments of God and rise to a new life; they glow with His grace as if they have emerged from the healing waters of the Bethesda pool. Yet that does not happen to everyone, but only to those few who receive a touch of God's grace. We do not know how they are selected. But the rest of us continue to wait for their turn at the pool, blind, deaf and paralysed. God came to the paralysed man, learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, and asked him, "Do you want to get well?" With these words, He sends us a clear message. We should all ask ourselves that same question, and we should all be able to answer: "Yes, I do wish to be cured. I do want this miracle to happen."

But are we ready for it? Are we all prepared to seek it out and embrace it? The blessed Augustine knew how deep he was in sin and how despicable his condition was. Still, he said to the Lord: "Please make me pure, but do it later." We pray; we strive to live by the Gospel and aim for everlasting life, but do not we respond to Him in the same manner: "Grant me this O Lord, but first give me time to do my will and sin as I please, without reminding me about Your cross and Your Resurrection..."?

Christ confronts us with the same question: "Do you want to get well? Do you want life?" If we answer with an honest yes, He will not have us wait for the water to swirl or His power to descend. He will tell us immediately: "Get up and walk!"

Get up and walk! Get up with faith and confidence; do not wait to be lifted! My grace will show you where to go! When we pray, we often know that we can begin to act on our prayers. Still, we do nothing, expecting God to do it for us. But God gives us the strength to live. He died for our sake, but He cannot live our lives for us.

So let us all remember the narration about the Paralytic and apply it to ourselves. Let us pray that God will give us His grace and strength, but remember to take responsibility for our lives and choices. Let us dedicate our lives to Him, remembering the words of the Apostle: "I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

*Metropolitan Anthony of Surozh*

Lord, it was not the pool that healed the paralytic, but Your word.  
The power of Your voice was stronger than the chronic bond of the disease.  
Therefore he cast away the burden of sickness and took up his bed as a witness  
to Your abundant mercies. Lord, glory to You!

Hymn of Praises  
Sunday of the Paralytic