

Let us cleanse our senses and see through the gleaming, unapproachable light of Christ's Resurrection.

Now is everything filled — full with light — the heavens, the earth, and the underworld.

All is presently bathed in light: Christ is risen from the dead.

The heavens make merry, the earth rejoices, the underworld exults.

The Angels in Heaven hymn Thy Resurrection, O Christ-Saviour. Do Thou make us, on earth, also worthy to glorify Thee with a pure heart.

The Angelic Choir, horrified at seeing its Creator and Master dead, doth now, in joyous song, glorify Him resurrected.

Today Adam exults, and Eve rejoices and with them do the Prophets and Patriarchs sing worthy songs to the Creator of all and to our Deliverer, Who did descend into the underworld for our sake.

The Giver of Life leads men out of hell this day, and uplifts them to Heaven; He lays low the powers of the enemy and breaks down the gates of hell by the Divine power of His authority.

Saint John Maximovitch

On Sunday 25 May 2014 is the Sunday of the Blind Man

Matins Gospel: John 20:11-18

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15

Gospel: John 9:1-38

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

The Word without beginning with the Father and the Spirit, born from a Virgin for our salvation, let us believers praise and let us worship Him; for He was well pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh and undergo death, and to raise those who had died, by His glorious Resurrection.

Kontakion of the Blind Man

With the eyes of my soul all diseased I come to You, O Christ, as the man blind from birth, crying to You in repentance: You are the radiant light of those in darkness.

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Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: Acts 17:1-9; John 11:47-54

Carpos and Alphaeus of the 70; Martyr Alexander of Thessalonica

Tuesday: Acts 17:19-28; John 12:19-36

Hieromartyr Helladius; John the Russian Confessor

Wednesday: Acts 18:22-28; John 12:36-47

Martyr Eutychius; Nikitas, Bishop of Chalcedon

Thursday: Mark 16:9-20; Acts 1:1-12; Luke 24:36-53

Martyr Theodosia; Virgin Martyr Theodosia of Constantinople

Friday: 19:1-8; John 14:1-11

Isaacius of Dalmatus; Macrina, grandmother of St. Basil the Great

Saturday: 20:7-12; John 14:10-21

Martyr Hermias; Eusebius and Haralambos the Monk-martyrs



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

25 May 2014

Though I was Blind, Now I See

Today we commemorate the healing of the man who had been born blind. Saint John tells us how Jesus sought him out, applied a paste to his eyes, and instructed him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. When the man returned, he was able to see.

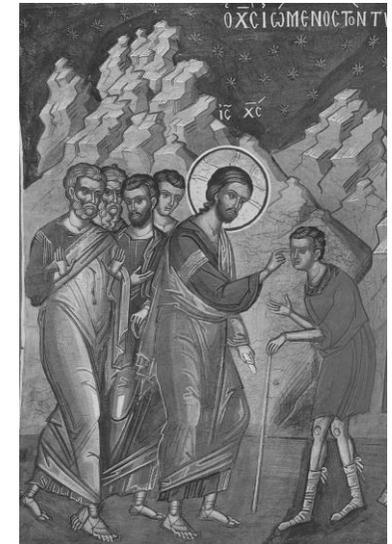
This miracle which the Lord worked in giving sight to the blind man, is closely connected to the mysteries which we have been celebrating since Pascha. In rising from the dead, the Risen Christ has given light to the whole world and has released us from the powers of darkness. At last Sunday's Liturgy we proclaimed that Christ, "after being hidden from sight in the tomb, has risen again more brightly than the sun, and thereby illumines all believers."

However, the Resurrection of the Lord is not simply an external event that we are called to affirm, but a living reality that we need to learn to see. Like the man in the Gospel, we too are blind, although our blindness is probably more spiritual than physical. Our eyes have become darkened by sin, and by the fallen state of the world into which we are born.

The Risen Christ comes to enlighten us with His light, just as He came to the man born blind. He comes to heal us of our own spiritual blindness. However, in order to behold the true and saving light, we need to learn humility and repentance, acknowledging our own blindness and calling out to Him for healing.

You, too, should come to Siloam, that is, to Him who was sent by the Father, as He says in the Gospel: "My teaching is not my own; it comes from Him who sent me." Let Christ wash you, and you will then see. ... You will be able to say, "I was blind, and now I see." And, as the blind man said when his eyes began to receive the light, you too can say, "The night is almost over and the day is at hand."

Saint Ambrose of Milan



A Mercy of Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise

An introduction to the Divine Liturgy (continued)

We saw last week that we can only address God as “Our Father” because of Jesus Christ. And it is Christ who teaches us what it means to relate to God as our Father in this prayer that sums up our basic relationship to Him as we approach the Holy Mysteries.

- **Our Father in heaven.**
We do not pray to some abstract deity, but to a personal God who is revealed as Father and who the Church continually addresses as the “Lover of humankind.”
- **May Your name be hallowed**
We pray that we and all people may acknowledge the holiness of God’s name, that we may live in a way that “hallows” God’s name, and in some way come to share in His holiness.



- **Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**
We ask that we may share ever more closely in God’s life as we await to coming of His Kingdom, and that His rule may be established on earth. We open ourselves to being obedient to His will.
- **Give us today our daily bread**
We ask God to supply our needs, the material things which we need in order to live. But we also ask for something more, for “the bread of the day” also refers to God’s eternal day. Thus we ask to share in His life.

- **Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us**
We know that we need God’s forgiveness, but Christ teaches us that we can receive this forgiveness only in the measure that we are prepared to forgive those who have sinned against us.
- **Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one**
We pray for strength and guidance in times of trial and struggle, for we know that we are dependent on God’s mercy at every moment of our lives.

In one place it is said that the Father ‘will give good things to those that ask Him’ (Matthew 7:11); elsewhere, that He will ‘give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him’ (Luke 11:13). From this we learn that those who pray to God with steadfast faith in these promises receive not only remission of sins but also heavenly gifts of grace. The Lord promised these ‘good things’ not to the righteous but to sinners, saying: ‘If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him?’ (Luke 11:13). Ask, then, unremittingly and without doubting, however poor your efforts to gain holiness, however weak your strength; and you will receive great gifts, far beyond anything that you deserve.

Saint John of Karpathos

The Ascension of the Lord

This coming Thursday is the feast of the Ascension of the Lord. On Wednesday, we “take leave” of the presence of the Risen Christ among His disciples. And then on Thursday we celebrate Jesus Christ’s Ascension into heaven where He is exalted at the right hand of the Father.

The Ascension of Christ is really the fulfilment of His Resurrection. When He rose from the dead, He did not simply resume a normal human life, but appeared to His disciples in a glorified body which was immortal and incorruptible. Now He ascends to the Father, and is no longer present on earth in a bodily way, yet He abides with the faithful forever.

With the Ascension of Christ, we also see our own human nature being taken up into the glory of heaven. “We who seemed unworthy of the earth, are now raised to heaven,” says St John Chrysostom. Through His Ascension, Christ has opened the way by which we too will be able to be taken up into the glory of the Father.

However, Jesus Christ tells us that He will not leave us as orphans. By ascending to the Father, He is opening the way for the Holy Spirit whom He promises to send to comfort and help us. The Ascension of Christ is a joyful feast, both because it assures us that Christ’s work is completed, and because it encourages us to await and pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.



You were taken up in glory, Christ our God, giving joy to your Disciples by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, when through the blessing they had been assured that you are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

Apolytikion of the Ascension

The eternal and unoriginate God,
having mystically deified the human nature which He has taken,
carries it up today!
Angels preceding, showed Him to the apostles,
as He was ascending into heaven in great glory!
And worshipping Him, they said: “Glory to the ascended God!”

From Matins of the Ascension