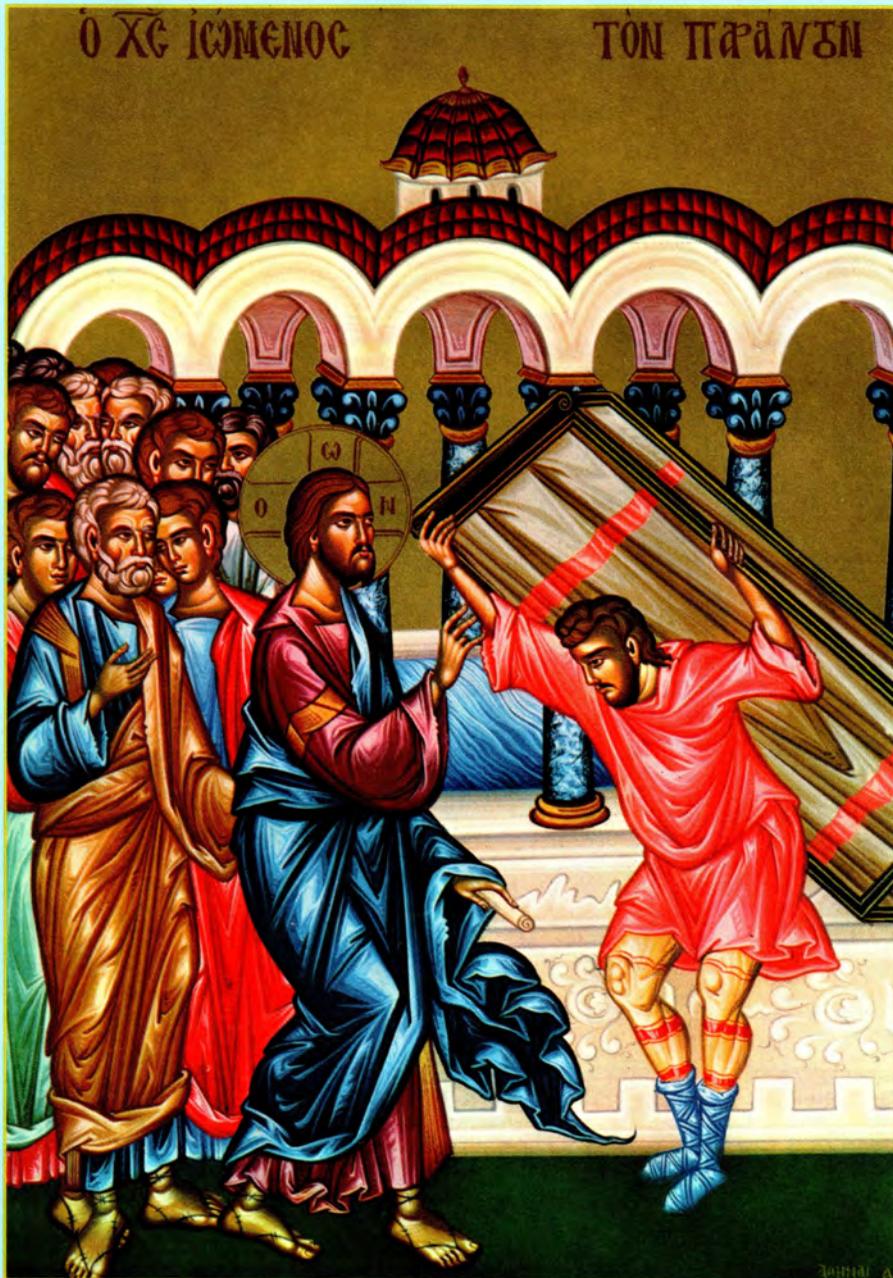


SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC



Icon of the Sunday of the Paralytic

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

At the beginning of this fourth Paschal Week, that of the Paralytic Man, our readings are again taken from the Acts of the Apostles and St. John's Gospel. Interestingly enough, both readings report cures of paralysis. In Acts, Peter cures a paralyzed man and in John Jesus cures a paralyzed man. Of course the big difference between the two miracle stories is that Peter cures the man in the NAME OF JESUS. Peter declares, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ cures you! Get up and make your bed."

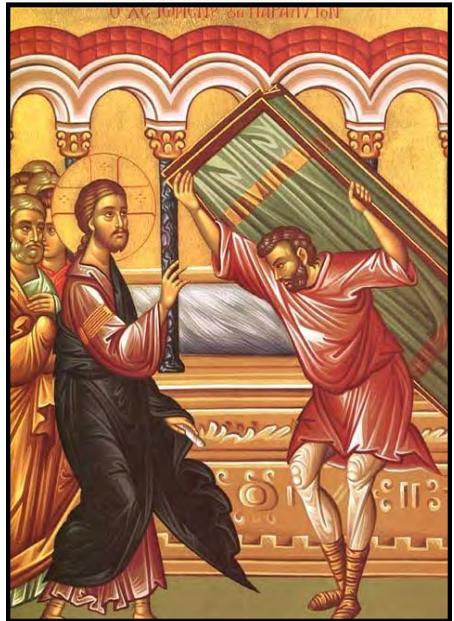
With both readings conveying a story about the cure of paralysis, it is easy to get distracted and think that the cure of this malady has some real symbolic meaning. While I believe that this can be one possible interpretation, especially since our Eastern Church calls this the week of the paralytic man, I also think that other meanings can be discerned from these readings.

Consider this. In the story that John presents, Jesus cures the paralytic man on the Sabbath. This is the reason that precipitates controversy with the Jewish leaders. A specific rabbinical law prohibited the carrying of one's bed on the Sabbath. The complaint of the Jewish leaders is not yet against Jesus, but against the action of the man who had been cured. His justification is implicit in his reply: If Jesus could perform this cure, surely it was proper to obey his command in this matter.

In this section of his Gospel, John uses several visits of Jesus to Jerusalem on the great Jewish feasts as the occasion to show that in Him the aspirations of Judaism, symbolized by these feasts, found a greater significance. This account is but one of a series of "signs" presented by John that manifest Jesus' role as life-giver.

In Acts Jesus' role as life-giver is again emphasized with Peter calling upon Jesus' name to cure the man. There is great power in the very name of Jesus. He is the physical manifestation of God Himself.

One of the messages, therefore, that I derived from these readings is a reiteration of a message



I have thought about before, namely that the way of living that Jesus calls us to is truly life-giving and transforming. To live with unconditional love for others, changes your life. To make Jesus' way of living your personal way of living brings peace, contentment and understanding.

When you embrace the Jesus way of living, which is not based on how others act or respond to you, you experience true freedom - you become your own person. Why? Because you chose how you live, think and act! You don't allow others to control your life! You don't allow the events of life to change who you are! That, in my estimation, is true freedom. Jesus showed us how to truly become the persons God intended when He created us.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

As I shared in the last issue of this article, I truly believe, and our Church exhorts us to believe, that in worship we encounter our living God. Through worship, as I shared with you, God makes Himself present and active in our time. Jesus' passion, death and resurrection constituted the essence of His redemptive work. The narrative of these salvific actions of the Incarnate Son of God formed the oldest part of the Gospel tradition. The solemn celebrations that we just recently experienced again, are centered on these events. The divine services of Great and Holy Week, crafted long ago in continuity with the experience, tradition and faith of the first Christians, help us penetrate and celebrate the mystery of our salvation. The prayers and the ritual of these special services are meant to help us experience, in some way, these salvific acts. Of course in order to experience this we must psychologically and spiritually fully enter into these rituals. This means we must reflect upon what we pray and do.

The prototype of Pascha is the Jewish Passover, the festival of Israel's deliverance from bondage. Like the Old Testament (OT) Passover, Pascha is truly a festival of deliverance. But its nature is wholly other and unique, of which the Passover is only a prefigurement. Pascha involves the ultimate redemption - deliverance and liberation of all humanity from the malignant power of death - through the death and resurrection of Christ. Pascha is the feast of universal redemption.

Of course a person can only experience this if he has a sense of being in bondage - limited and captive to the things of this world. The fears that we have as humans are a sign of this bondage. God has indeed freed us even from the fear of death.



Our earliest sources for the annual celebration of the Christian Pascha come to us from the second century. The feast, however, must have originated in the apostolic period. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to imagine otherwise. The first Christians were Jews and obviously conscious of the Jewish festal calendar. They truly could not have forgotten that the remarkable and compelling events of Christ's death, burial and resurrection occurred at a time in which the annual Passover was being observed. These Christians could not have failed to project the events of the passion and the resurrection of Christ on the Jewish festal calendar, nor would they have failed to connect and impose their faith on the annual observance of the Jewish Passover. St. Paul seems to indicate as much when writing to the Corinthians, (1 Cor 5:7-8) "purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

If and when we enter into these celebrations with a desire to become more aware of their true meaning, we will be rewarded with great insight.

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

Building on what I shared in the last issue of this article, I would emphatically state that the kingdom of God is the content of the Christian faith - the goal, the meaning and the content of the Christian life. According to the unanimous witness of all scripture and tradition, it is truly the knowledge of God, love for him, unity with him and life in him. The kingdom of God is unity with God, the source of all life, indeed life itself. It is life eternal: "And this is eternal life, that they know you (John 17:3). It is for this true and eternal life in the fullness of love, unity and knowledge that man was created. So in a real way, the Eucharist provides us with a clear expression of the meaning and the purpose of life. It helps us to understand life as God understands it.

The prophets of the Old Testament (OT) hungered for this kingdom, prayed for it, foretold it. It was the very goal and fulfillment of the entire sacred history of the OT, a history holy not with human sanctity (for it was utterly filled with falls and betrayals) but with the holiness of its being God's preparation for the coming of his kingdom.

And now, "the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). The only-begotten Son of God became the Son of man, in order to proclaim and to give to man new life. By his death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead Jesus has come into his kingdom: God "made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things" (Ephesians 1:20-22). Christ reigns,



and everyone who believes in him and is born again of water and the Spirit belongs to his kingdom and has him within himself. "Christ is the Lord" - this is the most ancient Christian confession of faith, and for three centuries the world, in the form of the Roman empire persecuted those who spoke these words for their refusal to recognize *anyone* on earth as lord except the one Lord and one King.

The kingdom of Christ is accepted by faith and is hidden "within us." The King himself came in the form of a servant and reigned only through the cross. There are no external signs of this kingdom on earth. It is the spiritual kingdom extended into time. And for those who have believed in it and accepted it, the kingdom is already here and now, more obvious than any of the "realities" surrounding us. "The Lord has come, the Lord is coming, the Lord will come again." This triune meaning of the Aramaic expression *maranatha!* contains the whole of Christianity's victorious faith, against which all persecutions have proven impotent.

This can only be true by faith and faith in the presence of God's Kingdom calls believers to live in a certain way, which is summarized by unconditional love for others. What is your faith? What does this mean to you?



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations and best wishes are extended to Andrew and Anna (Petrovich) Bluj on the occasion of the initiation of their son,

CHRISTIAN DAMIAN BLUJ

into the Church.

God Grant Him Many Blessed Years

Многая літа – Многая літа

COMING THIS FALL

Start cleaning out your cupboards, closets and storage spaces for a major fall fund-raiser - our parish RUMMAGE SALE. This year we will not include *clothing* or *shoes* in our sale. Please do not offer items that are not clean or are not in working order. Thank You!



LAST WEEK'S PRESENTATION



I would like to again thank our deacon-to-be Len Mier for presenting information to us on the Resurrection and to congratulate him. I can truly say that I am very proud of the progress he is making in his preparation to serve our church as a deacon. He is very conscientious about his studies and very dedicated to our parish.

CALLED TO HOLINESS

The call to holiness, as I have attempted to convey in this article, is a call to become an authentic "child of God" - that is a human being who thinks and acts (i.e., lives) like Jesus, a model of what humans were created to be like. God, however, out of His great love for us, made this a personal choice. He made it a personal choice so that those who embraced the Jesus way of living might freely and voluntarily return His love. Jesus is a prime example of a person who freely returned God's love. He did this as a human being.



The thing that stops most people from freely changing and embracing the Jesus way of living is their fear of change. Most people don't easily embrace change.

What is funny about humans is that they only seem to embrace change when the pain of continuing to live as they have always lived is so great that they cannot stand it any longer. As a therapist I repeated encountered this phenomenon. People seemed to only come into therapy when they were at their wits end and even then they would resist changing how they lived. The fear of what life might be like if they changed the way they thought and lived,

(Continued on page 6)

Schedule of Services

FOURTH PASCHAL WEEK

Sunday May 7 - Weekend of Paralytic Man

10:00 AM + Olga Natalie Hubchick; Nadia Sebastian

Monday May 8 - John, Apostle & Evangelist

8:00 AM - Special Intention

CLERGY CHRISM CONFERENCE May 9th - 12th

Tuesday May 9 - Translation of Nicholas' Relics

No Service Scheduled

Wednesday May 10 - Mid-Pentecost - Simon the Zealot, Apostle

No Service Scheduled

Thursday May 11 - Cyril & Methodius, Apostles to the Slavs

No Service Scheduled

Friday May 12 - Epiphanius & Germanus, Bishops

No Service Scheduled

Saturday May 13 - Glyceria, Martyr

No Service Scheduled

FIFTH PASCHAL WEEK

Sunday May 14 - Weekend of the Samaritan Woman

10:00 AM + Walter Kizel; Jaroslava Zalopnyj

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

slowed the process of "getting well." The most interesting thing about life is that change is necessary in order for it to be dynamic instead of static. I would always say to a client, "If the way that you are living brings you pain, then why keep living the same way? If how you are living is ineffective, why keep living the same way?" The fact of the matter is that growth only comes with change. You cannot grow spiritually, physically or psychologically without change.

So the call to holiness, in my estimation, is also a call to change and to embrace change as a way of living. If we let God and life to guide our change, then the only result can be greater contentment and peace. The opening of one's mind and heart to life and change will, believe me, only bring a deeper understanding of life.



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Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
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Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Pastor

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Cell: (313) 580-4412
WRuchgy@gmail.com

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony
*In most instances membership
required for six months*

Funerals
*Membership of an immediate
family member required*

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
313.563.5509

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org>
[Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

After having shared thoughts about the Gospel of St. Mark, I've decided that I would share just some general thoughts about the NEW TESTAMENT (NT) which is our Sacred Book. The book known as the NT is a collection of twenty-seven writings differing in style and content. While some of them adopt the historical narrative form (Gospels and Acts of the Apostles), others are letters or epistles, and the last one (the Book of Revelation) utilizes the prophetic style. Within the epistles differing styles and contents can be distinguished: some respond to very concrete problems (e.g., 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians), Romans is made up of practically an entire treatise and Hebrews, a sermon, while James has more of the aspects of a sapiential work.

This collection makes up the CANON of the writings of the NT. The word "canon" in Greek means "rule," "norm" or "standard." We find ourselves before a group of writings that the Christian Church has considered to be normative or authoritative for knowing the new relation of man and mankind with God, which was inaugurated with Jesus Christ and which we can the NT in contrast with the Old.

In the NT, Sacred Scripture is frequently cited or alluded to by referring to the Old Testament (OT) (Mk 12,24). Often it is designated by the titles of the two great collections that constitute it - "Law" and "Prophets:" (Mt 5:17;11:13); the collection of Psalms is also mentioned three times (Lk 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20).

However, the canon of the OT was not yet defined in all its details at the beginning of Christianity. Only at the end of the 1st century was the Hebrew canon fixed at 39 writings; the Greek-speaking Jews accepted into their canon other works composed in their language, and it was this canon that Christians adopted. In spite of all this, the canon was not fully determined, as is shown by the fact that in the NT some works are cited as Scriptures which were afterward not made part of the definitive canon (James 4:5; Jude 14:15).

In adopting the ancient Scriptures, Christians recognized their authority by their relation to the Lord Jesus and to the Spirit. Indeed, there was no thought of a new canon of writings; the word of the Lord Jesus in his earthly life or in his risen life was cited in the same way as the old Scriptures. Living authority was also owed to the

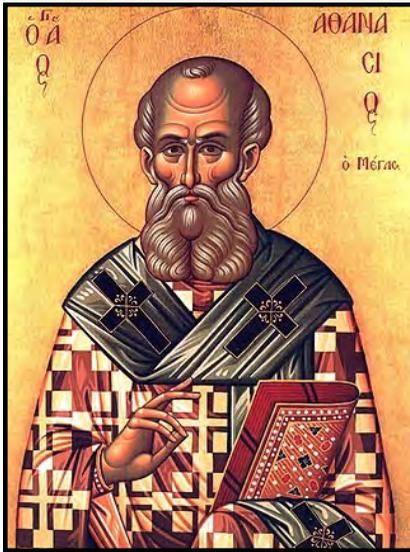
guidance of the Spirit and, in virtue of it, St. Paul could characterize as illegitimate every Gospel that differed from his own.

The writings of the apostles or disciples - even the most occasional ones - circulated and were read as a whole in Christian assemblies, as is shown by the concluding formulas of the liturgy. In this way their authority was increasing, even though they were not yet regarded as Scripture on a part with the OT. I shall continue information about the canon.

It is important, I think, that all should understand how the NT was formed.



Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church



In continuing Athanasius' arguments discrediting Arius' teachings, he reminds his reader that "my Father is still working, and I also am working (Jn 5:17). And had not the Old Testament wisdom literature averred that "when he [God] marked out the foundations of the earth, then I [God's Wisdom) was beside him, like a mater worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race" (Proverbs 8:29-31).

The logic of worship, then, seems to be plain. If God's Wisdom and Word creates, as Creator he is worthy of praise and adoration. And if God's Wisdom and Word is worthy of the Church's worship, he must be God, though in

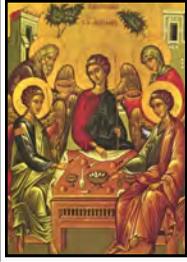
an ineffable, mysterious fashion.

The Arians felt that Athanasius was moving much too quickly. Did Proverbs 8 really teach what Athanasius was saying? What of Proverbs 8:22? "The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago." Surely if the text spoke of God's Wisdom as created, it must have a beginning, even if that beginning was somehow before time itself. Here, at least from Athanasius' perspective we approach the heart of the Arians' error. Had not the apostle Paul described the Son as "before all things" (Col 1:17). Athanasius reasons that if the Son is "before all things," the creation of Wisdom mentioned in Proverbs must be pointing to a specific purpose in the "economy" of God, that is, God's plan for human salvation.

Clearly Athanasius believes that if we compare Scripture with Scripture, Paul with the text of Proverbs, we are driven to discover a different interpretation for Proverbs 8:22 than that of the Arians. Athanasius finds his answer in the rhyme and reason of the incarnation and Christ's redemption of humanity.

Proverbs 8:22 does speak of God's Wisdom as created. When did this creation take place? At the time of the incarnation, Athanasius contends, when the Word "put on created flesh." The Wisdom of God was "created for his works," in the sense that in the incarnation the Son becomes what we are to save us from what we have become. "If he says that he was 'created for the works' it is clear that he means to signify not his substance but the dispensation [incarnation] which happened 'for his works.'

So we see that the early Church, in attempting to truly understand who Jesus IS, looked to the Scriptures and tried to find an answer there. It is clear, as we consider the arguments on both sides, that this debate evolved out of a real desire to understand Who Jesus IS. It is clear that the Arians didn't truly believe that Jesus was God Himself incarnate. It is equally clear that the followers of Athanasius embraced the fact that Jesus was and is truly God and truly Man. They were dealing, of course, with a GREAT MYSTERY.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

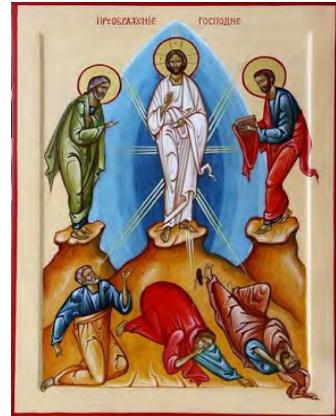
The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 63 No 19 WEEKEND OF THE PARALYTIC MAN May 6-7, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

The goal of Eastern Christian spirituality is a mystical life of union with God. The path that leads to this union includes the ascent that leads to this peak. As such, this path is different than the peak; yet it is organically connected to it, in the same way as the ascent of a mountain is to the peak. Only by prolonged effort, by discipline, can the state of perfection and mystical union with God be reached. Efforts that don't contribute to this crowning, this final moment of ascetic discipline (*i.e., the practice characterized by severe self-discipline and abstention from all forms of indulgence for religious reasons - included typically in such discipline in the East is fasting*) or to the mystical union with God, seem to be without purpose.

The connection between ascetical discipline and the mystical union with God is also closer than that between the path and the goal. Even though the living of that union is realized at the final end of ascetical efforts, its aura begins in the soul beforehand, along with them.

Christian perfection therefore requires a whole series of efforts until it is attained. The Apostle Paul compares these strivings with the training that athletes employ to get in shape in order to sin. Without referring to the word asceticism, St. Paul used the image of the ancient physical exercises to characterized the efforts made by the Christian to reach perfection. Clement of Alexandria and Origen later introduced the terms of asceticism and ascetic. Little by little in the East they gained a monastic coloring. Monasteries are called *askitiria*, places for physical training. The *askitis* (the ascetic) is the monk who strives to obtain perfection by observing all the rules of restraint or temperance through cleansing from the passions. Origen calls zealous Christians ascetics; they



are disciplining themselves to mortify the passions and develop good habits that lead to perfection.

Now the problem seems to be that people in our modern society don't buy into true self-discipline. There seems to be a sense in our society that self-gratification, which is instantaneous, is what we deserve. Our society seems to disparage such things as voluntary fasting or abstaining from things. And yet history tells us that there is no other way to spiritually grow that by the use of self-discipline.

The Cure of Baptism Foreshadowed

What manner of cure is this? What mystery does it signify to us? For these things are not written carelessly, or without a purpose, but as a figure and type they show in outline things to come, in order that what was exceedingly strange might not, by coming unexpectedly, do harm among the many the power of faith. What then is it that they show in outline? A Baptism was about to be given, possessing much power, and the greatest of gifts, a Baptism purging all sins and making men alive instead of dead. These things then are foreshown as in a picture by the pool, and by many other circumstances. And first is given a water which purges the stains of our bodies, and those defilements which are not, but seem to be, as those from touching the dead, those from leprosy, and other similar causes; under the old covenant one may see many things

done by water on this account. However, let us now proceed to the matter in hand.

First then, as I before said, He causes defilements of our bodies, and afterwards infirmities of different kinds, to be done away by water. Because God, desiring to bring us nearer to faith in Baptism, no longer heals defilements only, but diseases also. For those figures which came nearer [in time] to the reality, both as regarded Baptism, and the Passion, and the rest, were plainer than the more ancient. ... And this miracle was done in order that men, learning that it is possible by water to heal the diseases of the body, and being exercised in this for a long time, might more easily believe that it can also heal the diseases of the soul.

St. John Chrysostom

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