

SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC MAN



Icon of Jesus Healing the Paralytic Man

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this weekend of the Paralytic Man, our readings, the Epistle, taken again from the Acts, and the Gospel, taken from John's Gospel, both highlight miraculous acts performed by Peter and Jesus. Both include the curing of "paralysis". Acts conveys an additional miracle by Peter, namely the raising from the dead of Tabitha.

As we think about these two miracle stories, we have to ask ourselves what the Early Church intended to teach its members by pairing these two stories, especially during this period of Pentecost. They have been selected for a reason since they do not follow in the ordinary pattern of reading sequentially through a particular source.

We must remember that this post-Easter period was, for the newly baptized members, still a catechetical period, a period to learn about the Christian faith. So the readings were paired together to teach members something.

So what is the message? As I thought about it, I realized that the early Christians were still not being accepted by the society they were living in and so, as they embraced the Way of Jesus, they embraced stress and anxiety. So perhaps these two stories were an encouragement to them and us to not become paralyzed in spirit, becoming afraid of trying to live like Jesus.



Jesus and His message can heal any paralysis of spirit. If we embrace His Way of Living, He will give us the courage and strength to face the challenges of life - to become people who do not let the criticisms or the ridicule of others stop us from living as Jesus lived, knowing that if we make the effort, we will be the ones who will benefit.

The message of Jesus is truly life-giving. It frees us from our insecurities, fears and anxieties. It tells us that we are loved beyond all measure and that God is sharing His Life and Spirit with us because He loves us. This, I believe, is truly an inspiring message.

Think about it. The Creator of the whole universe loves each and every one of us individually and know each and everyone of by name. He is not some distant creator who creates and forgets about His creation. He is here with us and within us to help us find the true meaning and purpose of our lives. There can be no happiness if we don't understand why we are alive.

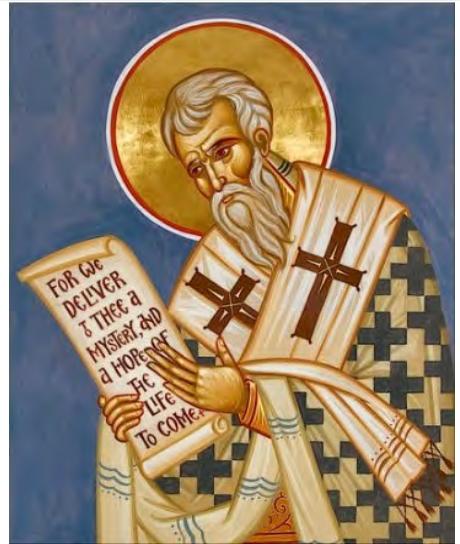
THE RESURRECTION OF THE HUMAN BODY

As I ended this article in the last Bulletin, I indicated that Cyril believed that Christ appeared to Thomas and the others in His resurrected human body. Cyril wrote:

What need was there for the showing of His hands and side, if, in accordance with the depravity of some, He did not rise with His own flesh? If He wanted His disciples to believe differently concerning Him, why did He not rather appear in a different frame, and by putting the form of the flesh to shame, draw them towards a different understanding? But it was most important that He show Himself carefully at that time so that they should believe in the future resurrection of the flesh; so important that even when the time seemed right to change the fashion of His body into ineffable and supranatural glory, He providentially deigned to appear once again as He was before, so that He should not be thought of as having any other body than that in which He had even suffered death on the Cross.

Cyril makes a good point here. It was God's way of revealing that there is the resurrection of the human body. The strong soteriological perspective of Cyril's Christology is more than apparent here. The underlying presupposition is clear enough: Christ could not truly be said to have redeemed mankind - human flesh, by which Cyril means human nature in its totality - unless He had also resurrected His own human body.

Christ, then, deigned to appear before His disciples still bearing the signs of corruptibility on His hands and side - marks which, properly speaking, should no longer have been present on His resurrected and therefore incorruptible body - so as to make it absolutely clear that He

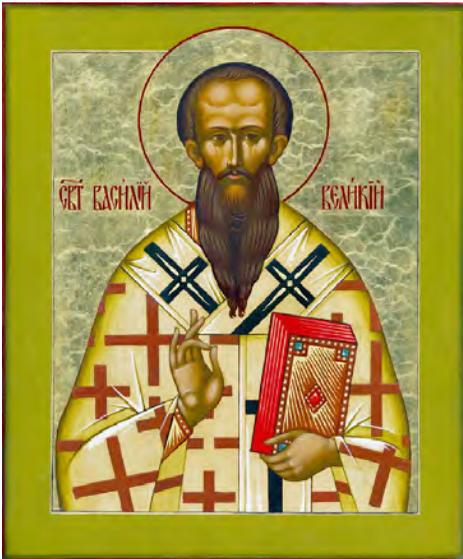


ST CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

had risen with the very same body that He had received from the Holy Virgin.

St. Cyril adds that the Resurrection must have been of the body of Christ, since its very purpose was to release human flesh from the power of death and corruption. Cyril says that "the power of death extended only over the flesh", that is, over the humanity but not the divinity of Christ; for death and corruption could not be said to have any dominion over the Person of Christ, the Divine Logos, who is by His very nature LIFE itself. I must agree that Cyril presents a good argument.

ST BASIL'S THOUGHTS ON GENESIS



ST BASIL THE GREAT

Basil states that on the first day God created not a physical substance such as galactic light or electric charge, but TIME.

The light being good and adequate to its appointed function, God separated the light from the darkness. That is, He did not claw apart the light from the darkness, but assigned to each their separate spheres of influence. Day would be followed by night, and daylight by darkness, as time began. Why does the text stress that God gave these things names? Because in the thought of the ancients, the conferral of a name bestowed

function, and things did not truly exist until they were functionally related to society. Society requires that all things have names. Naming and calling the light "day" and the darkness "night" was essential to their full creation.

We see here now why light was created as the first of God's works, for time formed the foundation for the rest of creation. God created the first day, to be followed by the second, and so on for the entire first week. In creating daylight and time, God created the light in which He could work. Men needed light to work, and God also created the light and day during which He would continue to create the world.

After this, the period of a working day, evening came, ending God's labors as evening ended the labors of any working man. And then after this, the next morning came. This brought to a conclusion the work of the first day of God's divine work week. Mention of the first day marks the beginning of the structural outline of the creation story, that of the creation of the world in one week. Ancient Israel experienced working life in terms of weeks - in a single week a laborer, for example, could farm and harvest just so much. God did more than that: in a single week He created the whole cosmos.

Again we note that we must read this story as literature from the ancient Near East, which was concerned not with matter so much as with function - in particular, the functions of a world experienced through eyes unacquainted with our modern science.

GENESIS IS NOT MEANT TO BE HISTORY!

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



ADULT DISCUSSION

Sunday June 2nd

I have asked our Deacon Candidate, Len Mier, to lead a discussion on the papers that I have shared with the parish on End of Life Issues. He prepared these papers as a requirement for his educational program.



He will be joined with Dr. Tony Grech, of our parish, in discussing these issues.

The discussion will take place immediately after the Divine Liturgy and a brief pause for coffee. The issues he addressed, I believe, are very important for all of us.

A GREAT TIME

I was called after our recent Easter Dinner and told that indeed it was a great time. No one had to clean-up. Thanks!

*Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.
The important thing is not to stop questioning*

A CALL TO HOLINESS

As you know, if you have been following this article, God's call for us to work toward holiness has many different meanings, even though, in the end, they are all the same. The call is to come to a deeper understanding of who we are in God's creation. It is a call by God for us to enter into a relationship with Him. Because He created us in His image - seen in the Person of Jesus - and given us the potential to grow in Jesus' likeness, He is calling us to truly be His children.



He has also infused into us the power to accomplish this task. He is sharing His Holy Spirit with us right now which is the ability to grow in Jesus' likeness. So He has given us a model and also the power to help us imitate the model. He has given us everything to accomplish this goal.

This is the true meaning and purpose of this earthly life. The meaning: to discover that we have been created in His image; the purpose: to grow in His likeness. **Do you believe this?**

If you find it difficult to believe this ask yourself: *Why am I alive? What is my life all about?*

As I suggested in one of the other articles in this Bulletin, our beliefs and our prayers need to be in concert with one another. Our prayers, especially at Easter, are all about the meaning and purpose of our lives. This is clearly seen in the life of Jesus. He demonstrated

(Continued on page 8)

OUR MOST IMPORTANT DOCTRINE: THE TRIUNE GOD

In itself, the Cappadocian doctrine of the Trinity remains totally meaningless unless one remember that its goal is to maintain the Christological and pneumatological presuppositions that the incarnate Logos and the Holy Spirit are met and experienced first as *divine agents of salvation*, and only then are they also discovered to be essentially one God. We have to understand that Christ is God's revelation to us about how to live this human life in order to spiritually benefit from its experiences and the Holy Spirit gives us the strength, courage and power to grow in our likeness of Jesus by putting on Christ - live like Christ (i.e., adopting His attitudes and His way of living).

It is well known that, during the theological debates of the fourth century, the Cappadocian Fathers were accused of tritheism, so that Gregory of Nyssa was even obliged to issue his famous apologetic treatise proving that "there are not three gods." It remains debatable, however, whether he succeeded in proving his point *philosophically*. The doctrine of the three hypostases, adopted by the Cappadocian Fathers to designate the three divine Persons, has definite Plotinian and Origenistic associations, which normally implied *substantial* differentiation. The Fathers, however, remained faithful to the terminology they had adopted, in spite of all difficulties and criticism - both from the "old Niceans" faithful to Athanasius and from the theologians of the Latin West - because



they saw no other means of preserving the Biblical experience of salvation in the fully identifiable and distinct persons of Christ and the Spirit, an experience which could never enter the categories of philosophical essentialism.

So we see why it took so very long for the Church to come up with this essential doctrine. They had to find the appropriate words to express the ideas that One God could be comprised of Three distinct Persons. Not an easy task. They needed to maintain the notion of monotheism (One God) and yet understand Jesus, the Christ as also God, which was accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

END OF LIFE ISSUES BY DEACON CANDIDATE LEN MIER, JR

Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. Hades, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It took a body, and met God face to face.

The Pascha Catechetical Sermon of St. John Chrysostom.

Questions of suffering, pain and death dominate belief systems of all human cultures. It is something that transcends culture, time and place. They are core questions that make up human nature. Death is the most complex of questions that Man has dealt with since the start of time. In this process of questioning, Man has developed religions and systems of belief in God to help cope with, and attempt to answer, the question, "why does Man die?"

In our faith, scripture tells us "God did not make death, and does not delight in death of the living." Wisdom 1:13. We see that Jesus Himself is moved to tears by the death of His friend Lazarus. This is because death is something that God did not want for his creation.

Then where does death come from? As Saint Paul explains the problem to the Romans, "Therefore, just as through one person sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all, inasmuch as all sinned." *Romans 5:12*. Mankind's first sin has been called Original, or Ancestral, Sin. It marks a break in the original establishment of God's order for His creation. It was Man's attempt to gain for himself that life, or knowledge, of God in a way in which he was not yet ready to fully participate. This inappropriate

exercise of Man's free will in opposition to God's will is the one thread that ties many different belief systems together. Man placed himself before the law that God gave him; he sinned. He missed the mark God gave him to strive for, and from that point Man has struggled to understand what this separation from God's grace and life means. Man struggles with death.

We Christians have difficulties trying to define death. We always have our eye on the afterlife and on what that experience will be like. It is difficult to imagine what the afterlife is, since there are as many divergent views as there are denominations within Christian belief or as many individual understandings of church teachings.

What I hope to do is stimulate discussion on what death means to those who believe in the saving life and work of Jesus Christ. Only by asking this question can we approach an answer to the question, "what is life"? After reading several books and journal articles I thought that I had a grip on what the meaning of a Christian death is. However, the more I read the more confused I became.

I would like to start by saying I believe that Man is made up of body, intellect and spirit. Man does not have life in himself. Only God has life in himself as evident when he told Moses His name is: "I AM that I AM." *Exodus 3:14*. God is, and does not need anything outside of Himself to exist. Our life is a gift from God, a sharing of His existence. This means that we do not own our life nor may we do with it what we please. As humans, we say we share in God's image and likeness. This sharing of His likeness starts when His spirit is infused into our physical body. *(Continued on page 10)*

Schedule of Services

Sunday, May 12 - Weekend of the Paralytic Man
10:00 AM - Special Intention

FOURTH PASCHAL WEEK

Monday, May 13 - Glyceria, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, May 14 - Isidore, Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday May 15 - Pachomius the Great - MID-PENTECOST
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday, May 16 - Theodore, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Friday, May 17 - Andronicus & Others, Apostles
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday, May 18 - Theodotus & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, May 19 - Weekend of the Samaritan Woman
10:00 AM - Special Intention

(Continued from page 5 - the Call to holiness)

by the way He lived and died how this earthly life is meant to help us spiritually grow. He also revealed to us that it is possible for human beings to live in this manner. We must always remember that He was fully and completely human during His Passion and Death. It was precisely how He endured the greatest challenges of His life that He was raised from the dead. A life lived in the manner that Jesus lived His life gains a real and true awareness of the meaning and purpose of life.



Did you learn anything new this year through your experiences of the Great and Holy Week and Easter? Did you make the time special? If not, why not?

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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
586.755.3129

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Leonard Mier
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Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

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

MORE ABOUT HOLY SCRIPTURES: THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

John also records for us some of the most beloved stories about Jesus. Only in the fourth Gospel can we read about the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee, the night visit of Nicodemus, the conversation with the woman at the well, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and the washing of the disciples' feet. In John's gospel, we find the bulk of our Lord's teaching about the Holy Spirit and here the mysterious "I" in the sermon on the Mount ("You have heard that it was said... but I tell you....") becomes the majestic "I am" who is God's own Son.

John writes in very simple Greek. He does not use a wide range of vocabulary. He often repeats words and phrases. Yet the end result is a compelling document whose very simplicity makes it impressive.

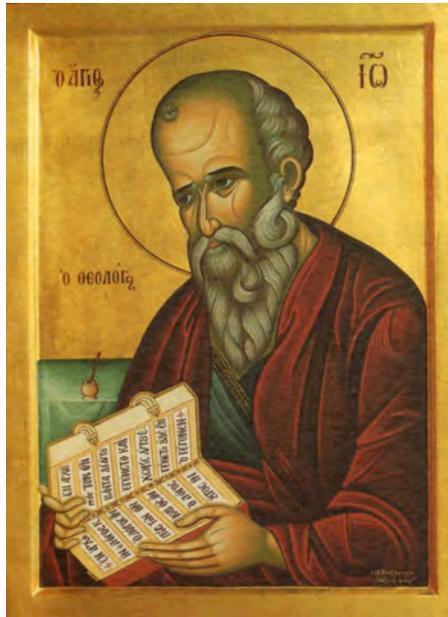
The fourth Gospel was written by a man with an adequate but not extensive education in Greek. In fact, some scholars suggest that this Greek sounds acquired, not native. Furthermore, the writing has a strong Jewish flavoring. This is exactly what

one would expect of John, the son of Zebedee - a Jew who had lived for a long time in Galilee, an area whose population included more Gentiles than Jews.

Why did John write as he did about Jesus? What was his purpose in gathering together this account? Two of his own statements provide the answer to this question.

First, John asserts in his first epistle: "This we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it.... We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us".

Second, John states at the end of his gospel: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name". John's gospel, therefore, like the other three gospels, is a witness document. He tells us Jesus' story so that we will understand who Jesus is, put out faith in him as the unique Son of God, and so experience life in Christ and fellowship with other believers.



ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

END OF LIFE ISSUES BY DEACON CANDIDATE LEN MIER, JR

(Continued from page 7)

this union of body and spirit, being mediated through our intellect, our mind and rational thoughts, is the start of our process to become a person who is being formed into His image.

It can be said that a Christian life is a life of union with the Trinity by having put on Christ in baptism; we are called to live a life as exemplified by the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. Jesus, God incarnated as man, is someone who experienced all things we can experience with the exception of sin. I am called to show the same love that Christ showed in the Gospel message, a self-emptying love for both the Father's will and those living around me, ignoring all the biases and prejudices of the culture of our time. We are not saved by the raw exercise of God's power but by His coming among us in the world to show us a life as conformity to the Divine Will, as wisdom, and goodness to those around us. Only in this kind of life is there the ability to transform, obliterate, and consume death and sin.

Saint Paul in chapter six of his letter to the Romans tells us about life in Christ. Paul says that we were baptized in the death of Christ when we were immersed in the waters of baptism. By going down into the water we entered into the same action of going down to Hades or death. If we have gone into this death, we, like Christ, will rise from death. By this we are united to His resurrection in new and eternal life. "We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him. As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God. Consequently, you too

must think of yourselves as [being] dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus." *Romans 6:9-11* What Saint Paul tells us is reassuring to people who believe in Christ. However, I think I can say that at some level every man has a fear of earthly physical death.

While shadowing a team of palliative care specialists I was able to observe the case of an elderly dementia patient and her son, her primary care giver, who was also a Baptist minister. When the discussion turned to the person's possibility of death, her son refused to use the term death. He kept referring to it as her transition. I am assuming he was referring to the transition from this physical existence to one where the spirit within us leaves the confines of this world and starts on a new existence in the Kingdom of God. He believed life is eternal; her life does not end, it will just be different. In physical death our experience of life is changed but not ended.

St. John Chrysostom tells us, let no one fear death, for Christ's death has freed us from the death that is separation from God. Christ's transition from this world by His death on the cross was the gateway for us and all who were held by Hades. Christ has slain death, endured pain and suffering, and did not lose hope in His Father's love. He corrected the error of sin in human nature by showing us how to live a life fully in tune with the Divine Will. He did so all the way to the final moments when He surrendered His life to the Father, which His Father accepted, allowing the Father to do with His human nature what the Father willed.

TO BE CONTINUED!



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.

Vol. 65 No 19

Weekend of the Paralytic Man

May 11-12, 2019

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

There is an ancient rule according to which theology develops and is based on spirituality: the “law” of prayer becomes the “law” of believing [in the sense of the content of faith]. The way the doctrine of the Spirit emerged in the East confirms this rule. The real focus on deification in the doctrine of salvation helped the Eastern fathers finally reach the understanding of the full deity of the Spirit. As is well known, it took considerable time for the Christian

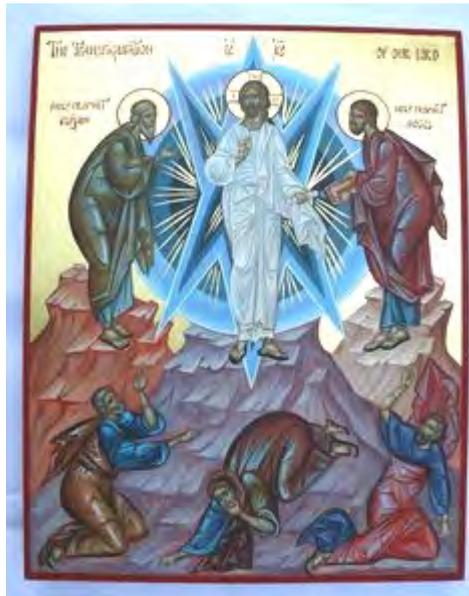
church to decide for the full deity of the Spirit as the deity of Christ was the primary focus in the beginning. It was the task of the Cappadocians to help convince the church that the Spirit belonged, both in equality and in dignity, to the holy Trinity.

For Athanasius, the trinitarian baptismal formula showed that the

Spirit shares the same divinity as the Father and the Son. Why? Because our deification requires it; if the Spirit is not consubstantial with the Father and the Son, the Spirit cannot make us conform to the Son and therefore cannot save us. For Athanasius and Basil, the Spirit has a relationship with the Son similar to that which the Son has with the Father.

Basil's brother, Gregory of Nyssa, further developed the doctrine of the divinity of the Spirit

on the basis of his doctrine of salvation. Building on his brother's and Athanasius' formulations, he argued that the formation of the Christian and his perfection according to Christ's model are the work of the sanctifying Spirit; the Spirit therefore is consubstantial with the Son and the Father. *More to come!*



THE TRANSFIGURATION

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