multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water; whoever stepped in first after the troubling of the water was healed of whatever disease he had. One man was there, who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked.

<u>HELP FOR THE 2016 FESTIVAL</u>: This year our Greek Fest will be bigger than ever! We really need many more helping hands. Please sign up to help and please ask relatives, friends and neighbors to help, too! A **SIGN-UP sheet** is enclosed. We thank you for anything and all you can do!

2016 FESTIVAL DONATIONS: We still need smaller items for the Fest, that can be picked up while you are grocery shopping. May is Catch-All Month. We will be collecting **Mazola Vegetable Oil, and Pop.** We also have a special list for **WINE**. Please take a look at our lists and see if you can help us with something. Any donation amount will help, including your monetary donation, which we would use to purchase items at a discount. **Thank you so much!**

CONGRATULATIONS EARLY BIRD WINNER: Congratulations to The Staff of Atlantic Painting for winning the \$1,000 prize. If you haven't bought a ticket yet there is still time. Maybe you can be our next winner!

GREEK CULTURE DAY CAMP AT ST. NICHOLAS: The Greek Culture Camp is the week of July 25 to 29th, everyday, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.. Only a short time left for early registration. Please see the enclosed flyer and contact Kathy Roupas at 312-286-5639, if you are interested.

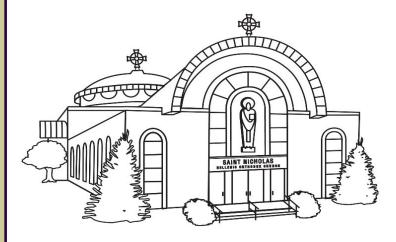
COMMEMORATION OF THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE: This year the Metropolis of Chicago will be hosting the Commemoration of the Fall of Constantinople on Thursday, June 2nd at 7:00 p.m. at Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Elmhurst, IL. This year we will have a presentation by Dr. Aykan Erdemir a former member of the Turkish Parliament who is know speaking our against the Turkish Government on their treatment of Religious Minorities. The title of his presentation is "*Beyond Two Worlds*" **Imagining Religious Freedoms and Diversity Beyond the Halki Seminary.** Please join us for this wonderful event. If you are interested in Going see Fr. Christodoulos for more details.

STEWARDSHIP REMINDER: Some years ago the owners of a hotel where the Beatles had stayed decided to auction off the bed linen the Beatles had used. The linen went to the highest bidder for \$750! One of the greatest indicators of what comes first in life is to be found in that for which we spend our money. If God is the Highest, how high is the bid of our weekly commitment to His work?

It is now almost June and still many parishioners haven't submitted stewardship pledges. If you haven't, please do so today. Also, at this time your stewardship payment should be almost least half way paid.

CHUCKLE: A coach for a soccer team of five year olds asked his players what they should do when the referee blows his whistle. One boy answered, "Stop and listen." From the stands the boy's mother yelled, "Where can I get one of those whistles."

Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church



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Sunday, May 22nd, 2016

Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!
Sunday of the Paralytic
Saint Basiliscos the Martyr, Bishop of Comana
Holy New Martyrs Demetrios and Paul of Tripoli

Readings:

Epistle: Acts 9: 32-42 Gospel: John 5: 1-15 Epistle Reader: Tina Savas

MEMORIAL

Peter Janakos 7 years Andrea Newman 8 years
Bessie Kaltsas 12 years James Miller 14 years
Barbara Janakos 23 years John Kaltsas 32 years
May their Memory be Eternal!

Coffee Fellowship Hour immediately follows the Divine Liturgy and is sponsored today by the Ladies Philoptochos, in the Dr. Mary Dochios Kamberos Community Center.

THIS WEEK AT SAINT NICHOLAS

Monday, May 23rd, 2016

4:30 p.m. Greek School

Tuesday, May 24th, 2016

7:00 p.m. Bouzouki Class

7:00 p.m. Adult Greek Dance

Wednesday, May 25th, 2016

Mid-Pentecost

8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy

4:30 p.m. Greek School

Thursday, May 26th, 2016

6:30 p.m. Junior Dance Troupe

7:00 p.m. Adult Religious Education

Saturday, May 28th, 2016

Great Vespers 5:00 p.m.

FOLLOWING THE RESURRECTION LITURGY and every service for 40 days until the Ascension of our Lord, the priest turns to the congregation and exclaims:

"Glory to His Third-Day Resurrection!" Δόξα τη Αυτού τριήμερω έγερσει!

and the congregation responds by saying:

"We bow down to His Third-Day Resurrection!" Προσκυνούμεν Αυτού την τριήμερον έγερσιν!

Let us all remember these life-giving words at the conclusion of the Liturgy. Let us say them with feeling and strength for the 40-day period of the Resurrection as is the practice of our Holy Orthodox Church.

θεὶς τὰ γόνατα προσηύξατο· καὶ ἐπιστρέψας πρὸς τὸ σῷμα, εἶπεν, Ταβηθά, ἀνάστηθι. Ἡ δὲ ἤνοιξεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῆς· καὶ ἰδοῦσα τὸν Πέτρον, ἀνεκάθισεν. Δοὺς δὲ αὐτῆ χεῖρα, ἀνέστησεν αὐτήν· φωνήσας δὲ τοὺς ἀγίους καὶ τὰς χήρας, παρέστησεν αὐτὴν ζῶσαν. Γνωστὸν δὲ ἐγένετο καθ' ὅλης τῆς Ἰόππης, καὶ πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν ἐπὶ τὸν Κύριον.

Acts of the Apostles 9: 32-42

IN THOSE DAYS, as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints that lived at Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord. Now there was at Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him entreating him, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter rose and went with them. And when he had come, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping, and showing tunics and other garments which Dorcas made while she was with them. But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, rise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. And he gave her his hand and lifted her up. Then calling the saints and widows he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

Κατὰ Ἰωάννην 5:1-15

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνω, ἀνέβη ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. Ἔστι δὲ ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις έπὶ τῆ προβατικῆ κολυμβήθρα, ἡ ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ Βηθεσδά, πέντε στοὰς έγουσα. ἐν ταύταις κατέκειτο πλῆθος πολὺ τῶν ἀσθενούντων, τυφλῶν, χωλῶν, ξηρῶν, ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν. ἄγγελος γὰρ κατὰ καιρὸν κατέβαινεν έν τῆ κολυμβήθρα, καὶ ἐταράσσετο τὸ ὕδωρ ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραγήν τοῦ ὕδατος ὑγιὴς ἐγίνετο ὧ δήποτε κατείγετο νοσήματι. ἦν δέ τις άνθρωπος ἐκεῖ τριάκοντα καὶ ὀκτὰ ἔτη ἔχων ἐν τῆ ἀσθενεία αὐτοῦ. τοῦτον ἰδὰν ὁ Ίησοῦς κατακείμενον, καὶ γνοὺς ὅτι πολὺν ήδη γρόνον ἔγει, λέγει αὐτῷ θέλεις ύγιης γενέσθαι; ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ ὁ ἀσθενῶν. Κύριε, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω, ἵνα ὅταν ταραχθη τὸ ὕδωρ, βάλη με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν ἐν ῷ δὲ ἔρχομαι ἐγώ, ἄλλος πρὸ έμοῦ καταβαίνει. λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς: ἔγειρε, ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει. καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἦρε τὸν κράβαττον αὐτοῦ καὶ περιεπάτει. ἦν δὲ σάββατον ἐν ἐκείνη τῆ ἡμέρα. ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ τεθεραπευμένω σάββατόν έστιν οὐκ ἔξεστί σοι ἆραι τὸν κράβαττον, ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ ποιήσας με ὑγιῆ, ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει. ἠρώτησαν οὖν αὐτόν τίς ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ εἰπών σοι, ἆρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει; ὁ δὲ ἰαθεὶς οὐκ ἥδει τίς ἐστιν ὁ γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐξένευσεν όγλου όντος ἐν τῷ τόπω. μετὰ ταῦτα εύρίσκει αὐτὸν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῶ· ἴδε ὑγιὴς γέγονας· μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε, ἵνα μὴ γεῖρόν σοί τι γένηται. ἀπῆλθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἀνήγγειλε τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὸν ὑγιῆ.

The Gospel according to John 5:1-15

At that time, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethesda which has five porticoes. In these lay a

Resurrectional Apolotikion

Ήχος γ

Εὐφραινέσθω τὰ οὐράνια, ἀγαλλιάσθω τὰ ἐπίγεια, ὅτι ἐποίησε κράτος, ἐν βραχίονι αὐτοῦ, ὁ Κύριος, ἐπάτησε τῷ θανάτῳ τὸν θάνατον, πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν ἐγένετο, ἐκ κοιλίας ἄδου ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς, καὶ παρέσχε τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.

Third Mode

Let the Heavens rejoice; let earthly things be glad; for the Lord hath wrought might with His arm, He hath trampled upon death by death. The first-born of the dead hath He become. From the belly of Hades hath He delivered us, and hath granted great mercy to the world.

Hymn of Saint Nicholas Patron of our Parish Ήχος δ

Κανόνα πίστεως καί εικόνα πραότητος, εγκρατείας Διδάσκαλον, ανέδειξέ σε τή ποίμνη σου, η τών πραγμάτων αλήθεια, διά τούτο εκτήσω τή ταπεινώσει τά υψηλά, τή πτωχεία τά πλούσια, Πάτερ Ιεράρχα Νικόλαε, πρέσβευε Χριστώ τώ Θεώ, σωθήναι τάς ψυχάς ημών.

Fourth Mode

A model of faith and the image of gentleness, the example of your life has shown you forth to your sheep-fold to be a master of temperance. You obtained thus through being lowly, gifts from on high, and riches through poverty. Nicholas, our father and priest of priests, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.

Memorial Hymn

Μνήσθητι, Κύριε, ὡς ἀγαθὸς τῶν δούλων σου, καὶ ὅσα ἐν βίῳ ἥμαρτον, συγχώρησον οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀναμάρτητος, εἰμὴ σὰ ὁ δυνάμενος, καὶ τοῖς μεταστᾶσι δοῦναι τήν ἀνάπαυσιν.

Kontakion Ήχος πλ δ

Εἱ καὶ ἐν τάφῳ κατῆλθες ἀθάνατε, ἄλλὰ τοῦ Ἅδου καθεῖλες τὴν δύναμιν, καὶ ἀνέστης ὡς νικητής, Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, γυναιξὶ Μυροφόροις φθεγξάμενος. Χαίρετε, καὶ τοῖς σοῖς Ἀποστόλοις εἰρήνην δωρούμενος ὁ τοῖς πεσοῦσι παρέχων ἀνάστασιν.

Plagal of the Fourth

Though You went down into the tomb, You destroyed Hades' power, and You rose the victor, Christ God, saying to the myrrh-bearing women, "Hail!" and granting peace to Your disciples, You who raise up the fallen.

Πράξεις Άποστόλων 9:32-42

Έν ταῖς ἡμεραῖς ἐκείναις, ἐγένετο Πέτρον διερχόμενον διὰ πάντων κατελθεῖν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἀγίους τοὺς κατοικοῦντας Λύδδαν. Εὖρεν δὲ ἐκεῖ ἄνθρωπόν τινα Αἰνέαν ὀνόματι, ἐξ ἐτῶν ὀκτὰ κατακείμενον ἐπὶ κραββάτῳ, ὃς ἦν παραλελυμένος. Καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Πέτρος, Αἰνέα, ἰᾶταί σε Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός· ἀνάστηθι καὶ στρῶσον σεαυτῷ. Καὶ εὐθέως ἀνέστη. Καὶ εἶδον αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες Λύδδαν καὶ τὸν Ἀσσάρωνα, οἴτινες ἐπέστρεψαν ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον. Ἐν Ἰόππη δέ τις ἦν μαθήτρια ὀνόματι Ταβηθά, ἢ διερμηνευομένη λέγεται Δορκάς· αὕτη ἦν πλήρης ἀγαθῶν ἔργων καὶ ἐλεημοσυνῶν ὧν ἐποίει. Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἀσθενήσασαν αὐτὴν ἀποθανεῖν· λούσαντες δὲ αὐτὴν ἔθηκαν ἐν ὑπερῷω. Ἐγγὺς δὲ οὕσης Λύδδης τῇ Ἰόππῃ, οἱ μαθηταὶ ἀκούσαντες ὅτι Πέτρος ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτῇ, ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτόν, παρακαλοῦντες μὴ ὀκνῆσαι διελθεῖν ἕως αὐτῶν. Αναστὰς δὲ Πέτρος συνῆλθεν αὐτοῖς· ὃν παραγενόμενον ἀνήγαγον εἰς τὸ ὑπερῷον, καὶ παρέστησαν αὐτῷ πᾶσαι αἱ χῆραι κλαίουσαι καὶ ἐπιδεικνύμεναι χιτῶνας καὶ ἰμάτια ὄσα ἐποίει μετ' αὐτῶν οὖσα ἡ Δορκάς. Ἐκβαλὸν δὲ ἔξω πάντας ὁ Πέτρος

FLOWERS FOR MOTHERS & TEACHERS: Because of the craziness of Holy Week & the Oratorical Festival, this year on Mother's Day we did not have the flowers that we normally have available to all Mothers. We apologize for this mistake and have flowers available for all Mothers, Grandmothers, Great Grandmothers and Godmothers today. We also will be having those same flowers for our Sunday School and Greek School teachers. In appreciation of all the hard work they do in teaching our children. THANK YOU!

GRADUATE & TEACHER APPRECIATION SUNDAY: We are honored today to congratulate our graduates from Eighth Grade Sunday School and our sixth Grade Greek School along with the teachers of both our Sunday School & Homer Greek School. Our teachers have done a wonderful job in guiding our graduates to where they are today. We will have a short program immediately following Liturgy today. We will first like to Congratulate our Homer Greek School Sixth Grade Graduate.

Michael George

As we continue on we would like to also Congradulate our Sunday School Eighth Grade Graduates.

Sebastian Caniglia Anastacia Hristakos Nicholas George Thomas Czajkoski Marianna Hristakos Griffin Isberg

May all our graduates be guided by the Grace of our Lord to always strive to grow closer to God.

SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC: Close to the Sheep's gate in Jerusalem, there was a pool, which was called the Sheep's Pool. It had round about it five sets of pillars supporting a domed roof. Under this roof, there lay many sick people with various maladies, awaiting the moving of the water, for it was believed that an angel of God touched the water and brought healing to the first to enter it.

It was there that the paralytic of today's Gospel was lying, tormented by his infirmity for thirty-eight years. When Christ beheld him, He asked him, "Will you be made whole?" And he answered, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." The Lord said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." And immediately the man was made whole and took up his bed. Walking in the presence of all, he departed rejoicing to his own house.

St. John Chrysostom writes this about this wonderful passage, "In that case (Matthew 9:2) there was remission of sins, (for He said, 'Yours sins be forgiven you,') but in this there is warning to strengthen the man for the future; 'Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto you'". Think about the implications that this had not only on Christ's ministry, but what it means to us today. Christ told the man, to go and sin no more, thus showing all that He is the Son of God, for only God has the authority to forgive sins. We, too, need to watch what we do in this life, for we are directly responsible for all the sins we commit. According to the Gospels, the Lord Jesus healed this paralytic during the days of the Passover, when He had gone to Jerusalem for the Feast, and dwelt there teaching and working miracles. According to St. John the Evangelist, this miracle took place on the Sabbath.

AH TO BE YOUNG AGAIN: Linda, 3, was busily getting the most possible enjoyment out of her chocolate ice cream cone when she saw her mother approaching with a wet washcloth. "Mommy," she begged, "please don't wash my face right now. I'm using it!"



ΕΤΟΣ 64ον

22 Maîou 2016

ΑΡΙΘ. ΦΥΛ. 21 (3286)

ΔΙΑΚΡΙΣΕΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΣΚΟΠΙΜΟΤΗΤΕΣ

Πόσες φορές δέν έχει ἀκουσθεῖ θόγος καταγγεθτικός ἐναντίον τῶν διακρίσεων καί τῶν σκοπιμοτήτων! Πόσες φορές, ἀκόμη καί βίαιοι ἀγῶνες, δέν ἔχουν διεξαχθεῖ ὧστε νά παύσει ἡ καταστρατήγηση τῆς ἰσότητας καί νά βασιθεύσουν ἡ ἰσονομία καί ἡ δικαιοσύνη! Πόσες φορές δέν ἔχουμε αἰσθανθεῖ σέ προσωπικό ἐπίπεδο νά μᾶς πνίγει ἡ ἀγανάκτηση, καθώς πιθανοθογοῦμε ἤ διακρίνουμε άδικία σέ βάρος μας, προκειμένου νά εὐνοηθεῖ καί νά προτιμηθεῖ κάποιος ἄθλος! Κι ὅθ΄ αὐτά εἶναι δίκαια συναισθήματα καί δικαιοθογοῦνται στά πθαίσια τῆς ἀνθρώπινης θογικῆς. Ἑθθοχεύει, ὅμως, σέ αὐτά ἔνας κίνδυνος!

Ποιός; Ὁ κίνδυνος τοῦ νά κυριαρχήσουν αὐτά -καί μόνον αὐτά- στήν καρδιά μας, μέ ἀποτέθεσμα νά καταπνιγεῖ κάθε ἄθλο συναίσθημα, ἰδίως ἡ ἀγάπη πρός τόν πθησίον, μιᾶς πού πικραμένοι ἀπό τήν ὅποια ἀδικία, τόν ὅποιο ἀποκθεισμό, τήν ὅποια ὑποτίμησή μας, ὁδηγούμαστε στό νά βθέπουμε τόν ἄθλο μέ καχυποψία, ὡς ἀνταγωνιστή, ἴσως καί ὡς ἐχθρό. Καί αὐτό διαπιστώνουμε πώς κυριαρχεῖ στήν κοινωνία μας, ὡς ἀποτέθεσμα τῆς ἐπιποθαιότητας καί τῆς ἀπερισκεψίας μέ τήν ὁποία ἐκφέρεται ὁ καταγγεθτικός θόγος, ἰδίως ὅταν ὑπρετεῖ κομματική σκοπιμότητα, μέ ἄμεση καί πρώτη συνέπεια τή διαίρεση τῆς κοινωνίας, τήν προκατάθηψη, τό πθῆγμα κατά τῆς κοινωνικῆς ἀθθηθεγγύης.

Διακρίσεις

Ή σημερινή εὐαγγελική περικοπή ἔρχεται νά δικαιολογήσει τόν διαφορετικό τρόπο ἐνεργείας ὅταν πρέπει νά ἐξυπηρετηθοῦν ἀντιφατικές καταστάσεις ἤ νά ὑποστηριχθοῦν προτεραιότητες. Στό κάτω-κάτω ὁ κάθε ἄνθρωπος εἶναι προσωπικότητα μοναδική καί ἀνεπανάληπτη, γι' αὐτό καί ἡ μαζικότητα δέν χαρακτηρίζει τόν τρόπο ἐνεργείας τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀλλά ἡ διάκριση. Ἡ πρώτη διάκριση πού γίνεται εἶναι ἀπό τόν ἴδιο τόν Χριστό. Κοντά στήν προβατική πύλη τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων –ἡ ὁποία ὀνομαζόταν ἔτσι ἐπειδή ἀπό ἐκεῖ ἔμπαιναν τά πρόβατα γιά τή θυσία στόν Ναό τοῦ Σολομώντα – ὑπῆρχε μιά διαμορφωμένη δεξαμενή, ἡ Βηθεσδά, δηλαδή «οἶκος ἐλέους». Γύρω ἀπό αὐτήν ὑπῆρχαν πέντε θολωτά ὑπόστεγα, ὅπου ἡταν ξαπλωμένοι πολλοί ἄνθρωποι μέ διάφορες ἀσθένειες. Ὅλοι περίμεναν τήν ἀγγελική παρουσία πού θά τάραζε τό νερό, ὥστε ὁ πρῶτος πού θά ἔμπαινε μέσα νά γινόταν καλά.

Μέσα ἀπό τό πῆῆθος τῶν ἀρρώστων, ὁ Χριστός ξεχώρισε ἔναν ὁ ὁποῖος ἦταν παράπτος καί βρισκόταν ξαππωμένος ἐκεῖ τριάντα ὀκτώ χρόνια! Μετά

από ἕναν ἱδιαίτερο διάλογο τόν θεράπευσε. Μέσα στό πλῆθος τῶν ἀσθενῶν θεράπευσε μόνον ἔναν! Βεβαίως καί αὐτός ὁ ἕνας ἦταν τόσα χρόνια κατάκοιτος, ἀλλά γιατί ὁ Κύριος θεράπευσε μόνον αὐτόν; Θά ἑξαντλοῦνταν ἡ θαυματουργική του δύναμη ἄν ἔκανε καλά καί ὅλους τούς ἄλλους; Ἡ ἀσθένεια καί ὁ θάνατος, μέ μιά λέξη ἡ φθορά, ἔγινε οἰκεία στήν ἀνθρώπινη φύση ὡς συνέπεια τῆς ἀμαρτίας. Μόλις οἱ πρωτόπλαστοι παρέβησαν τό θεῖο θέλημα, κληρονόμησαν τίς συνέπειες τῆς ἐπιλογῆς τους! Κι ὅμως, κι αὐτό ἀκόμη ξέρει ὁ Ἅγιος Θεός νά τό μετατρέπει σέ παιδαγωγία, ἀφοῦ ἰδίως μέ τήν ἀσθένεια δίνεται ἀφορμή, ἄν ὅχι καί εὐκαιρία ὑπομονῆς καί φιλοσοφίας, ὥστε ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀκόμη καί τόν χαρακτήρα του νά ἀλλοιώσει πρός τό καλύτερο. Λέει μάλιστα ὁ ἄγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Χρυσόστομος ὅτι ἄνθρωπος πού καθημερινά ἐπισκέπτεται νοσοκομεῖο ἡ κοιμητήριο δέν μπορεῖ νά ἀμαρτήσει! ἕτσι λοιπόν, θεραπεύεται ὁ ἕνας, ὁ ὁποῖος δέν εἶχε τίποτε ἄλλο νά ὡφεληθεῖ ἀπό τήν ἀσθένειά του καί ἀφήνονται οἱ ὑπόλοιποι, οἱ ὁποῖοι εἶχαν ἀκόμη πολλά νά μάθουν!

'Αππά καί ο τρόπος μέ τόν οποῖο ἐνεργεῖται τό θαῦμα συνιστᾶ διάκριση. Συνήθως, πρίν ἀπό τό θαῦμα ὁ Χριστός διεκδικεῖ τήν πίστη. Τώρα ππησιάζει τόν παραπυτικό καί τοῦ κάνει μιά περίεργη ἐρώτηση: «Θέπεις νά γίνεις καπά;». Καί ὁ ἄνθρωπος σμιπεμένος ἀπό την ὑπομονή τῶν τόσων χρόνων, μέ εὐγένεια καί χωρίς νά ἀποπάρει τόν Κύριο γιά τό παράξενο ἐρώτημα, ἀπαντᾶ τά ὄσα ἀναφέρει τό Εὐαγγέπιο. Καί ἀμέσως μετά γίνεται τό θαῦμα, ἀπόδειξη ὅτι ἡ δοκιμασία τῆς ὑπομονῆς ἰσοσταθμίζει τήν πίστη! 'Η ἀπαντοχή μας, καί μάπιστα ἡ ποπυετής, στην ὅποια θπίψη, ἐκτιμᾶται φοβερά στά μάτια τοῦ Θεοῦ!

Ή σκοπιμότητα τοῦ ἀγιασμοῦ μας

Μέ τό πού θεραπεύει τόν παραλυτικό ὁ Χριστός μας, τοῦ δίνει μιά ἐντολή: «Σήκω, φορτώσου τό κρεβάτι σου καί περπάτα». Αὐτό τό κάνει γιά νά δοῦν τόν πρώην παραλυτικό οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι νά κουβαλᾶ τό κρεβάτι του ἡμέρα Σάββατο καί νά πληροφορηθοῦν τό θαῦμα, ἀλλά καί γιά νά καταλάβουν ὅτι πρέπει διαφορετικά νά κατανοοῦν τίς διατάξεις τοῦ Νόμου. Ὁ Οχι μέ προσήλωση στό γράμμα, ἀλλά στό πνεῦμα τοῦ Νόμου, δηλαδή ὅχι μέ ἐξωτερική, σωματική συμμόρφωση, ἀλλά μέ πνευματική προσπάθεια ἀποχῆς ἀπό τήν ἀμαρτία καί καλλιέργειας τῆς ἀρετῆς.

Καί κάτι ἄλλο κάνει ἐπίτηδες ὁ Χριστός. "Οταν ἀργότερα συναντᾶ ἐκεῖνον πού θεράπευσε, δέν κομπάζει, ἀλλά οὐδέτερα τοῦ λέει: «Πρόσεξε τώρα πού ἔχεις γίνει ὑγιής, μήν ἀμαρτάνεις πλέον γιά νά μή σοῦ συμβεῖ τίποτε χειρότερο»! Ύπάρχει κάτι χειρότερο ἀπό τριάντα ὀκτώ χρόνια κατάκλισης καί ταλαιπωρίας; Φυσικά ὑπάρχει. Ἡ αἰωνιότητα τῆς κόλασης! Ὁ Χριστός μας ἀπευθύνεται στήν ἐμπειρία τῶν χρόνων αὐτῶν τῆς δυστυχίας, ὥστε ἡ ἐνθύμησή τους ν' ἀποτελεῖ στοιχεῖο σύγκρισης καί ἀποτροπῆς τῆς ὅποιας παρέκκλισης ἀπό τό θεῖο θέλημα.

`Αδεῆφοί, καί «νόμου μετάθεσιs» (Ἑβρ. 7,12) γίνεται, ὅταν αὐτό ἀποδεικνύεται σωτήριο γιά τόν ἄνθρωπο. Καί ὁ μόνος φιῆάνθρωπος νομοθέτης ξέρει, κινούμενος ἀπό την ἄφατη ἀγάπη του, νά ἐνεργεῖ ὥστε καθιστώντας ὑπέρτατο νόμο τή σωτηρία τοῦ καθενός, νά χειρίζεται μέ διάκριση τή ζωή μας ὑπηρετώντας τή σκοπιμότητα τοῦ ἀγιασμοῦ μας!

'Αρχιμ. Ί. Ν.