



St. Vladimir Orthodox Church

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SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN

June 9, 2024

Christ Is Risen! Indeed He Is Risen!

Khristos Voskrese! Voistinu Voskrese! (Russian/Ukrainian)

TROPARION, KONTAKION & PROKEIMENON

Troparion – Tone 5

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead// by His glorious Resurrection.

Kontakion – Tone 4

I come to Thee, O Christ, blind from birth in my spiritual eyes, and call to Thee in repentance:// “Thou art the most radiant Light of those in darkness.”

Kontakion – Tone 8

Thou didst descend into the tomb, O Immortal, Thou didst destroy the power of death. In victory didst Thou arise, O Christ God, proclaiming, “Rejoice!” to the Myrrhbearing Women,// granting peace to Thine Apostles, and bestowing Resurrection on the fallen.

Prokeimenon – Tone 8

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God!

V. In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel.

LITURGICAL COMMEMORATION

Sunday of the Blind Man

At the end of Chapter 8 in Gospel of Saint John, the Savior was disputing with the Pharisees in the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. He told them, "Your father Abraham was glad that he should see my day; and he saw it and rejoiced" (John 8:56). The Jews said that Jesus was not even fifty years old, so how could He claim to have seen Abraham? The Lord replied, "Before Abraham was, I am." I am, of course, is the name that God revealed to Moses in the Burning Bush. When the Jews picked up stones to throw at Him, He hid Himself and went out of the Temple.

We read in Saint John's Gospel (9:1-38): "As He passed by, he saw a man who was blind from birth." It might appear that Jesus was on His way to something or someone else, but in his Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John, the ever-memorable Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas, quotes from Homily LVI of Saint John Chrysostom: "that on going out of the Temple, He proceeded intentionally to the work, is clear from this: it was He who saw the blind man, and not the blind man who came to Him...."

Christ's disciples asked Him who had sinned, the blind man or his parents that he had been born blind. Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God might be manifested in him" (John 9:3). It was thought that a person who had some affliction must have sinned (or his parents did) to deserve such punishment. In the Book of Exodus (20:5), God said that he would visit "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." This, however, applied to the sin of idolatry, if the children emulated their parents' behavior.

The blind man was not born blind just so the miracle could be performed, but seeing the man in such a condition, the Lord decided to use him in a way that would manifest God's glory. He Who is the Light of the world healed the blind man and enlightened him. Giving sight to the blind was one of the signs which would identify the Messiah (Matthew 11:4-6).

The Lord made clay when He spat on the ground, and placed it in the man's empty eye sockets and sent him to the pool of Siloam to wash. Most versions of the Gospels translate the word *επεθηκεν* as "anointed," but it can also mean "to spread on," or "to smear." Siloam means "sent," and in Saint John's Gospel Christ says about forty times that He Himself had been sent by the Father."

This manner of healing reminds us of the way God created man by fashioning him from the dust of the earth. In the Old Testament God created man from the dust of the earth, now Christ, the same God, fashions eyes from the clay and places them in the blind man's empty sockets. Here are some quotes from the Pentecostarion:

At the Oikos of Matins: "He receives physical eyes as well as those of the soul."

In the Verses of the Synaxarion: O Bestower of light. Who are Light coming forth from Light; You gave eyes to the man who was blind from birth, O Word."

In the second exapostilarion: "Along the way, the Savior found a man who lacked both sight and eyes."

At Monday Vespers (stikheron of the Feast) we sing, "With his whole soul, and mind, and his tongue, the man who in times not long passed had been blind, confessed Him Who had fashioned eyes for him out of spittle and clay..."

Saint Theophylaktos says in his Commentary that "Jesus our Lord fashioned all the members of the blind man's body except for the eyes, which He omitted. By healing them now, he completes the divine act of creating and demonstrates that He is the Creator."

Jesus tests the faith of the blind man by sending him to the Pool of Siloam (which means "sent"). He respects the man's freedom, but asks for his voluntary and free participation in the miracle. The blind man, with faith, obeys God's command. He goes and washes in the pool, and he returns seeing.

The former blind man's life was not made easier, however. He becomes the object of the Scribes' and Pharisees' evil and hatred, those who believed in God and in the observance of His Law. They themselves were blind, yet they were suspicious of the formerly blind man, imagining that he only pretended to be blind and now was able to see. "They willingly were made blind by the dark letter of the Law, in which Christ, the resplendent Sun shines."

They questioned the man who was blind, but when they see the miracle before their eyes, instead of believing, they shut the eyes of their souls. Then the man's parents were questioned. They were afraid to confirm the miracle that happened to their son who was born blind, because they did not want to be expelled from the synagogue. They tried to avoid trouble by concealing the truth. Therefore, they said, "He is of age, ask him!"

We who receive benefits from God every day are ashamed or afraid to confess God because of our lack of trust. We put our own interests above God, knowing that He will understand us! He will understand us, but He will also see our faith and what priorities we have in our lives. Christ will see what "gods" we have put in His place, but He will not cease to remind us that He is the light of the world.

The blind man was healed, not only in the eyes of his body but eventually in his soul as well. He recognizes Jesus as God, and does not hesitate to confess it before the religious rulers with courage that many of us would envy. Faith alone is not enough, we also need to confess our faith in order to become genuine children of God. When we confess Christ before men, He will confess us before His Father, as the Lord has promised us: "Everyone who shall confess me before men, I also shall confess him before my Father who is in Heaven; and whoever denies me before men I also will deny him before my Father who is in Heaven" (Matthew 10:32).

In addition to the Sunday of the Blind Man, today the Church also commemorates the Icon of the Mother of God "Of the Passion" in remembrance of the miracles which occurred on this day.

In the Moscow church of the Unburnt Bush in the Khamovniki district, there is an Icon which was once in the Palace. The ancient writing is beautiful. The size of the Icon measures 1 arshin 12 vershkov long, and 1 arshin 7 vershkov wide. This Icon is commemorated twice: on September 4, the Feast Day of the Prophet Moses, and also on the Sixth Sunday After Pascha (the Sunday of the Blind Man), because according to Tradition, the Icon was transferred from the Kremlin to the newly-consecrated Khamovniki church on this day.

At Khamovniki is the Novodevichii convent (founded in 1524) and the Zachatievsky convent (founded in 1584), the rebuilt cathedral of Christ the Savior, the church of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker at Khamovniki and others. More than ten Orthodox churches in Khamovniki were destroyed during the Soviet era. Memorial chapels and memorial signs have now been placed on the site of some of the destroyed temples. Khamovniki is also the working residence of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, and the Publishing Council of the Russian Orthodox Church.

EPISTLE & GOSPEL READINGS

Epistle: Acts of the Apostles 16:16-34

Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

Gospel: John 9:1-38

Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing. Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?" Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him." He said, "I am he." Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight." Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know." They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed

already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see." Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from." The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK, CAREGIVERS, AND DECEASED

Dates are when the name was added to the bulletin; names will remain in four bulletins and then removed. To add the name again, please email Darice at daricekeyes@gmail.com.

For the Sick / Caregiver

Matushka Mary (5/19)

Father Paul (5/19)

Alexandra (5/19)

Lynne (6/2)

Bill (5/19)

Kim (5/19)

Katherine (5/19)

Kelly (5/26)

Liam (5/26)

Bill (6/2)

Carmine (6/2)

Marianne (6/2)

Subdeacon Serge (6/9)

Melody (6/9)

Michael (6/9)

Charlotte (6/9)

Vera (6/9)

For the Deceased

Albert (6/2)

Awatif (6/2)

SERVICES

Service Schedule for the week of June 9

Sunday June 9 – 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour in Daria Hall. During Coffee Hour there will be an Emergency Response Team meeting (see below).

Wednesday June 12 – ASCENSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST 7:00 PM Vespers with Litya

Thursday June 13 – ASCENSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

Saturday June 15 – 5:00 PM Vespers followed by Confession

Sunday June 16 – FATHER'S DAY 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour in Daria Hall

DONATIONS

Weekly Giving

June 2 – 76 adults, 17 youth, \$5,373

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be a Parish Council meeting this Tuesday, June 11 at 7:00 PM in the church basement.

Today there will be a meeting in Daria Hall during Coffee Hour regarding the formation of an Emergency Response Team – defibrillator training and choking device training, as well as discussions on security responsiveness. The meeting will be led by John Cassar. If you are interested, please attend this important meeting.

In celebration of Father's Day next Sunday, June 16, the FOCA Club will be providing an enhanced Coffee Hour.

St. Vladimir Feast Day Information:

Archbishop Michael will be celebrating with us on Saturday July 13 and Sunday July 14.

Vespers will be served on Saturday at 5:00 PM (tentative time), followed by Potluck Supper in Daria Hall.

Hierarchical Liturgy will be served on Sunday at 9:30 AM (tentative time), followed by Banquet in Daria Hall.

Divine Liturgy will be served on Monday (actual Feast Day) July 15 at 9:30 AM.

There are 3 sign-up sheets on the table in the back of the church across from the candle desk:

Sign-up for Potluck Dinner on Saturday.

Sign-up to attend Sunday Banquet (donations will be accepted at the door). If you do not sign up, please understand that we may not be able to accommodate you – food will be prepared for the number of people who sign up.

Sign-up to donate needed items for the Banquet; all items need to be brought to Daria Hall by Sunday July 7.

Help will be needed setting up and prepping the meal Saturday morning.

Help will be needed in the kitchen early Sunday morning.

Help will be needed serving the meal on Sunday.

Help will be needed cleaning up after the meal.

Please volunteer to help – many hands are needed both days!

NEWSPAPER AND PACKING MATERIALS (no more boxes or hangers) are still needed for the bazaar in June. Please bring to Daria Hall as soon as possible. Thank you.

A separate email was sent to all parishioners this past week regarding the two Diocesan Altar Server Retreats, which will be held in Endicott, NY on June 15 and in Wayne, NJ on June 29. If you are interested in attending, please be aware the registration deadline is this Tuesday, June 11.

Please remove all Pascha decorations from the church cemeteries. Per the Cemetery By-Laws: All decorations must be removed three weeks after the holiday.

On Friday **June 21**, Father is planning an outdoor camping trip for youth over the age of 12 and adults of the parish. The camping sight will be near the Holy Protection Monastery in White Haven, PA. More information will be provided later. If anyone has any questions, please contact Leon Brasowski.

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM SOUTH RIVER: The Ss. Peter and Paul South River Men's Club will be holding its Annual Spaghetti Dinner this coming Saturday, June 15th from 5:00 - 8:00 PM, in the Church hall at 9 Jeffrie Ave. (*Vespers will be served at 4:00 PM*). A limited number of "baskets" will be raffled off as well. Tickets: \$15 for adults and \$8 for 14 and under. Price includes spaghetti, great meat sauce, sausage, salad and dessert! Soda and water will be available for purchase at this BYOB event. Tickets are available by contacting Phil at 908-331-1297. Come and enjoy good food and fellowship!

The Ladies Assumption Altar Society will hold a bazaar/flea market in Daria Hall - open to the public and parish on Saturday **June 22** and only for our parish **June 23**. Please bring gently used items and clothing to be sold; electric items must work; no rust or damaged items please. The items may be placed in the coat room or on the left side only of the stage in Daria Hall. Large empty boxes, newspaper, bubble wrap, and tissue paper are also needed. The ladies are looking for volunteers to help price items and set up, and also to help on Saturday June 22 during the bazaar. We would really appreciate some male volunteers for security detail on Saturday. See Alla with any questions.

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

Senhet Andebrhan – June 11

Senhit Ananya – June 11

Amber Touch – June 11

Alexis Waite – June 13

Arina Balaka – June 13

Boryana Dorvil – June 14

Tony Vashkevich – June 15

Have a blessed birthday and may God grant you many years!

COFFEE HOUR

Hosts are responsible for providing and setting up the refreshments in Daria Hall at 9:00 AM and after Holy Communion, cleaning up after Coffee Hour including washing, drying and putting away dishes, taking out the trash, wiping down the tables, and cleaning up the Coffee Room including turning off and cleaning the coffee and tea pots. Hosts will be informed in advance if cream cheese, butter, or milk is needed. **PLEASE NOTE: Your assigned Coffee Hour Support Person will provide guidance, however, the Support Person will leave Daria Hall at 9:55 AM to attend church services. If you have arrived late or are not finished, you will be provided the key to lock the Hall when you are leaving for church services.** If you have any questions, please contact Melody Stavisky or Alla Strauss.

SUGGESTED MENU:

Bagels / Breads

Donuts / Pastries

Desserts are available to use from the two freezers in Daria Hall

Fruit

Salads

Tortilla chips & Salsa

Hummus

Sugar-free dessert

Oreos (non-dairy)

NOTE: Hosts may provide a luncheon for a specific event or holiday (panikhida, birthday, anniversary, holiday) **with advance notice to reserve the specific date to host the event.** The hosts will be responsible for all food preparation for such a luncheon.

June 9 Melody Stavisky, Cole Johnson
June 16 FOCA Club
June 23 Nina Laushell, Lynne Sheedy & Bill Hazelton
June 30 Ludwig & Paula Koerte, Nina Shafran
July 7 Madeleine Sekulich & Mark McDevitt, Ramazi Shubitidze
July 14 **ST. VLADIMIR DAY CELEBRATION**
July 21 Arina Balako, Herman & Francine Meyer
July 28 Tamara Karkusova, Ekaterina & Stanislav Uritsky
Aug. 4 **FAST** Luwam Tesfa, Nebiat Tesfa
Aug. 11 **FAST** Nancy Mitsos, Darice Keyes
Aug. 18 Ladies Assumption Altar Society
Aug. 25 Alex Godun, Blake & Jessica Kilgore
Sept. 1 Tyler Burger, Awet Tesfa
Sept. 8 Olga & James Bates, Tanya & Walter Tribbey
Sept. 15 James & Monia Pitra, Anne Cheslock
Sept. 22 **ANNUAL PARISH PICNIC – NO COFFEE HOUR**
Sept. 29 Sami Bachir, Nour Ragab
Oct. 6 Virgiliu & Gabriela Plesa, Mihaela & Tiberiu Milosav
Oct. 13 **ANNUAL TURKEY SOCIAL – NO COFFEE HOUR**
Oct. 20 Eleni Athanatos & Tom Sowanick, Alan & Mimi Berck