



St. Vladimir Orthodox Church

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Sunday of the Blind Man /
Venerable Simeon Stylites the Younger of Wonderful Mountain
May 24, 2020

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!
Христось воскресе! Воистину воскресе!
Khristós anésti! Alithós anésti!

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 Thou didst 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.

Sunday of the Blind Man

After the Midfeast (John 7:14), the Lord Jesus Christ came to the Temple again and taught the people who came to Him (John 8:2). After leaving the Temple, He opened the eyes of a man “who was blind from his birth (John 9:1).”

The miracle described in today’s Gospel (John 9:1-38) is even more remarkable than it might seem at first. Saint Basil and other Fathers tell us that this was not just a case of giving sight to a blind man born with eyes that did not function, but to someone who had no eyes at all! The second Exapostilarion for this Sunday says, “Along the way, our Savior found a man who lacked both sight and eyes...”.

The Gospel says, "Since the world began, it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one who was born blind" (John 9:32). There are examples in the Old (Tobit 2:17) and New (Mark 8:22-26) Testaments of blind people receiving sight, but this is something completely unprecedented.

The Savior placed clay in the man's empty sockets and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. When he obeyed these instructions, the eyes of clay became living eyes!

In his MENAION, Saint Demetrius of Rostov calls the blind man Saint Celidonius (see his account of Saint Lazarus in the Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles on January 4).

Venerable Simeon Stylites the Younger of Wonderful Mountain

Saint Simeon the Stylite was born in the year 521 in Antioch, Syria of pious parents John and Martha. From her youth Saint Martha (July 4) prepared herself for a life of virginity and longed for monasticism, but her parents insisted that she marry John. After ardent prayer in a church dedicated to Saint John the Forerunner, the future nun was directed in a vision to submit to the will of her parents and enter into marriage.

As a married woman, Saint Martha strove to please God and her husband in everything. She often prayed for a baby and promised to dedicate him to the service of God. Saint John the Forerunner revealed to Martha that she would have a son who would serve God. When the infant was born, he was named Simeon and baptized at two years of age.

When Simeon was six years old, an earthquake occurred in the city of Antioch, in which his father perished. Simeon was in church at the time of the earthquake. Leaving the church, he became lost and spent seven days sheltered by a pious woman. Saint John the Baptist again appeared to Saint Martha, and indicated where to find the lost boy. The saint's mother found her lost son, and moved to the outskirts of Antioch after the earthquake. Already during his childhood the Lord Jesus Christ appeared several times to Saint Simeon, foretelling his future exploits and the reward for them.

The six-year-old child Simeon went into the wilderness, where he lived in complete isolation. During this time a light-bearing angel guarded and fed him. Finally, he arrived at a monastery, headed by the igumen Abba John, who lived in asceticism upon a pillar. He accepted the boy with love.

After a time, Saint Simeon asked the Elder John to permit him also to struggle upon a pillar. A new pillar was raised by the brethren of the monastery with the blessing of the igumen, near his pillar. Having completed the initiation of the seven-year-old boy into monasticism, Abba John placed him upon this pillar. The young ascetic, strengthened by the Lord, quickly grew spiritually, in his efforts surpassing even his experienced instructor. For his efforts, Saint Simeon received from God the gift of healing.

The fame of the young monk's deeds began to spread beyond the bounds of the monastery. Monks and laypeople began to come to him from various places, desiring to hear his counsel and receive healing from their infirmities. The humble ascetic continued to pursue asceticism with instructions from his spiritual mentor Abba John.

When he was eleven, Simeon decided to pursue asceticism upon a higher pillar, the top of which was forty feet from the ground. The bishops of Antioch and Seleukia came to the place of the monk's endeavors, and ordained him as a deacon. Then they permitted him to ascend the new pillar, on which Saint Simeon labored for eight years.

Saint Simeon prayed ardently for the Holy Spirit to descend upon him, and the holy prayer of the ascetic was heard. The Holy Spirit came upon him in the form of a blazing light, filling the ascetic with divine wisdom. Along with oral instructions, Saint Simeon wrote letters about repentance, monasticism, about the Incarnation of Christ, and about the future Judgment.

After the death of his Elder, Saint Simeon's life followed a certain pattern. From the rising of the sun until mid-afternoon he read books and copied Holy Scripture. Then he rose and prayed all night. When the new day began, he rested somewhat, then began his usual Rule of prayer.

Saint Simeon concluded his efforts on the second column, and by God's dispensation, settled upon the Wonderful Mountain, having become an experienced Elder to the monks in his monastery. The ascent to Wonderful Mountain was marked by a vision of the Lord, standing atop a column. Saint Simeon continued his efforts at this place where he saw the Lord, at first upon a stone, and then upon a pillar.

Future events were revealed to Saint Simeon, and so he foretold the death of Archbishop Ephraim of Antioch, and the illness of Bishop Domnus, which overtook him as punishment for his lack of pity. Finally, Saint Simeon predicted an earthquake for the city of Antioch and urged all the inhabitants to repent of their sins.

Saint Simeon established a monastery on Wonderful Mountain, where the sick people he healed built a church in gratitude for the mercy shown them. The saint prayed for a spring of water for the needs of the monastery, and once during a shortage of grain, the granaries of the monastery were filled with wheat by his prayers.

In the year 560 the holy ascetic was ordained to the priesthood by Dionysius, Bishop of Seleukia. At age seventy-five Saint Simeon was warned by the Lord of his impending end. He summoned the brethren of the monastery, instructed them in a farewell talk, and peacefully fell asleep in the Lord in the year 596, having toiled as a stylite for sixty-eight years.

After death, the saint worked miracles just as he had when alive. He healed the blind, the lame and the leprous, saving many from wild beasts, casting out devils and raising the dead.

Epistle: Acts 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.

Service Schedule for the week of May 24 – services will be streamed live

Today – 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Wednesday May 27 – 7:00 PM Vespers with Litya **ASCENSION**

Thursday May 28 – 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy **ASCENSION**

Friday May 29 – 7:00 PM Moleben to the Theotokos

Saturday May 30 – 5:00 PM Vespers

Sunday May 31 – 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Weekly Giving

May 17 - \$2,197

Parish Announcements

Please remember to clean up all Easter decorations at the church cemeteries. Per the Cemetery By-Laws, all holiday decorations must be removed three weeks after the holiday. There is no rubbish removal provided, so please take your trash home with you for proper disposal.

Father Volodymyr is streaming live all church services on the church's Facebook page. After services, the video link will be emailed to everyone. Links to all videotaped services are available on the church's web page. Please do not attend services until further notice. Father Volodymyr will keep us advised as to any new directives from the OCA.

The church still has expenses and bills to pay, and we appreciate the donations! Please continue to send your donations to Father Volodymyr. Thank you for your cooperation in these troubling times, and we pray for everyone's continued health and well-being.

***Christ Is Risen! Indeed He Is Risen!
Khristos Voskrese! Voistinu Voskrese!***