



April 25, 2010
FOURTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA;
SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC

PASCHAL TROPARION - TONE ONE:

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE THREE:

Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad; for the Lord has shown strength with His arm! He has trampled down death by death. He has become the firstborn of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted the world great mercy!

PARALYTIC KONTAKION - TONE THREE:

By Your divine intercession, O Lord, as You raised up the paralytic of old, so raise up my soul, paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts; so that being saved, I may sing to You: "Glory to Your power, O Compassionate Christ!"

PASCHAL KONTAKION - TONE EIGHT:

You did descend into the tomb, O Immortal. You did destroy the power of death. In victory did you arise, O Christ God, proclaiming, "Rejoice" to the myrrh-bearing women, granting peace to Your Apostles and bestowing Resurrection on the fallen!

INSTEAD OF 'IT IS TRULY MEET...' we sing:

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace: "Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say: 'Rejoice, your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb! With Himself He has raised all the dead.'" Rejoice, O ye people!

Shine, shine, O New Jerusalem! The glory of the Lord has shone on you! Exult now, and be glad, O Zion! Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of your Son!

EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 1ST TONE:

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have set our hope on You!

ACTS 9: 32-42

In those days it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bed-ridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

ALLELUIA

I will sing of Your mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Your truth from generation to generation.

You have said: Mercy will be established forever, and My truth will be prepared in the heavens.

COMMENTARY

The power of God is truly manifested through participation in Jesus Christ. Peter's actions here display very clearly that it is only through Jesus Christ that the power of God is manifested. This is evident in both healing accounts. For Aeneas, we can see directly that Peter declares to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." This exchange parallels the account of the paralytic in John, where Christ tells him to rise, take up your bed and walk. Similarly, the account of the raising of Tabitha (Dorcas) from the dead shows a great reliance upon Christ's example. Just as Jesus cleared the room, knelt and prayed before Jairus' daughter, so too Peter did for Tabitha. Peter's faith in the Risen Christ and subsequently living his life according to that faith allows Jesus Christ to work through him. May we too learn from St. Peter, and believe with our whole mind, body and soul in the Risen Christ, so that He might work through us as well!

GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

JOHN 5: 1-15

At that time there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed." He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'" Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk?'" But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

COMMENTARY

Jesus Christ is the Resurrection, the Life and the Salvation of the world. To become alive, we must first believe. This is why Christ's question to the paralytic is so important. The question made public the fact that the man had kept his faith even through thirty-eight years of infirmity (how could a paralytic be the first to enter the water?). This question also displayed the need for human beings to help each other. This help is ultimately fulfilled in Christ Himself, who became Man to heal us all. Finally, this question shows that not all who are infirm actually desire healing. Some actually revel in the infirmity as a license to continue a life of complaint and bitterness, avoiding the painful lesson that perhaps this infirmity is necessary for salvation. May our Risen Lord continue to encourage our faith in Him as we journey to the physical and spiritual healing that is only present in Him!



SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From *The Prologue* for Apr. 12/Apr. 25 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:

The Venerable Isaac the Syrian II

(Isaac the Syrian I is commemorated on January 28.) St. Gregory the Dialogist writes about this Isaac. He came to Italy at the time of the Goths, and in the city of Spoleto he entered a church to pray. He asked the verger to allow him to remain locked in the church overnight. And so he spent the entire night in prayer, remaining in the same place. The same thing happened the next day and even the second night. The verger called him a hypocrite and struck him with his fist. Instantly, the verger went insane. Seeing that the verger was bitterly tormented, Isaac bent over him, and the evil spirit departed from him and the verger was restored to health. Upon hearing of this incident, the entire populace of the city thronged around this amazing foreigner. They offered him money and property, but he declined all, accepted nothing and withdrew into the forest, where he built a cell for himself, which rapidly grew into a large monastery. Isaac was known for working miracles and especially for his discernment. On one occasion he ordered the brethren to carry all the hoes into the vineyard and to leave them there. The next day Isaac, along with the brethren, went out into the vineyard and brought along lunch. The brethren were puzzled. Who was this lunch for, since there were no laborers? Upon arriving at the vineyard, there were as many men digging as there were hoes. This is what happened: these men came as thieves to steal the hoes, but by the power of God, they were kept there and made to dig all night. On another occasion, two half-naked men came to Isaac and sought clothing from him. Isaac sent a monk to a hollow tree along the road to retrieve what he would find there. The monk departed, found some clothing and brought it to the monastery. The abbot took these clothes and gave them to the beggars. The beggars were extremely ashamed when they recognized their own clothes, which they had hidden in that tree. Once a man sent two beehives to the monastery. A monk hid one along the way, and he brought the other to the monastery and turned it over to the abbot. The saint said to him: "Be careful upon your return. For a poisonous snake has slithered into the beehive that you left along the way. Be careful, therefore, that it does not bite you."

Saint Basil the Confessor

During a time of iconoclasm, this devout man was bishop in the town of Parus in Asia Minor. He refused to sign an imperial document against the veneration of icons. For that, Basil was greatly persecuted and severely tortured. But he remained as firm as a diamond in his Orthodoxy. He reposed at the beginning of the eighth century and was went to the Lord.

The Venerable Acacius

Acacius was from the village of Gollitsa in Epirus. He was a great Athonite ascetic, spiritual father and clairvoyant. Acacius had many heavenly visions. He gave his blessing to several monks who chose the ascetic feat of martyrdom. Acacius reposed in his ninety-eighth year, in the year 1730.

The Venerable Athanasia

Athanasia was born on the island of Aegina, of wealthy and benevolent parents. She distributed her wealth to the poor and retreated to a monastery. There she took upon herself increasingly difficult ascetic labors. Athanasia took food only once a day, and then only bread and water. During Great Lent she ate once every other day. She tasted oil and fish only on the Feasts of the Nativity and the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even though she was the abbess of the monastery, Athanasia was a servant to the other sisters and shied away from having anyone serve her. Athanasia was made worthy of the great gift of working miracles, both during her life and after death. She reposed in the Lord in the year 860.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Saint Athanasia
Athanasia fulfilled good counsel;
She shone on earth like a bright star.
By the spirit she overcame bodily weakness;
While still young she came to love God.
Through fasting and vigils she withered her body,
Only to attain salvation for her soul.
Much property she distributed to the poor,
And gave herself fully to the will of God.
She saw a vision in the holy church:
A heavenly light penetrated the darkness,
And a voice came to her: "Athanasia,
Meekness and humility—this is pleasing to God.
Practice this above all else,
As long as your heart beats and your spirit breathes."
Athanasia, a wonderful soul,
Crushed all pride in herself.
She utterly sacrificed her will to God,
As obedient to God as the blazing sun.
The Lord returned love with love,
And with grace He rewarded her labors.
And when her time on earth was over,
He granted her life, immortal and paradisaal.

REFLECTION

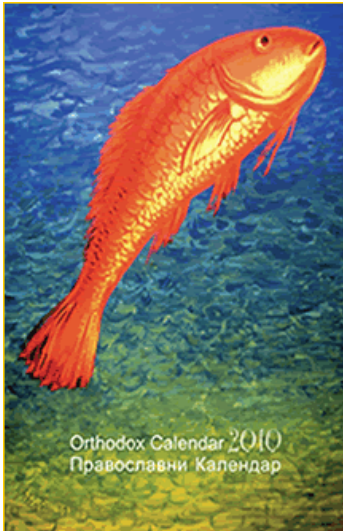
The wicked Emperor Constantine Copronymus had a virtuous daughter, the maiden Anthusa, "a beautiful branch on a wicked tree." Despite all the pressure her father put on her to marry, Anthusa remained adamant, for she was firmly attached, with a sincere love, to Christ the Lord. When her father died, Anthusa distributed her entire estate to the poor, entered a monastery and was tonsured a nun. As much a cause for astonishment as are the many noble men who have left the vanity of this world and followed the narrow path of Christ, the many women who have despised youth, riches and the transitory attractions of this world for the love of Christ are twice as much a cause for astonishment. The Lord Himself said that it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (cf. Matthew 19:23). Difficult yes, but not impossible. For him who despises himself, it is easy to despise the riches of the whole world.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Special Prayer Request

His Grace, Bishop Maxim is asking all of our clergy and faithful to offer prayers for the recovery of our brother in Christ, V. Rev. Miladin Garic, who is seriously ill and currently at the Amador Sutter Hospital, in Jackson, California.

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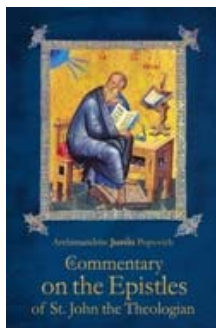
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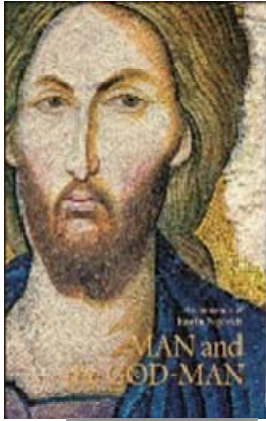


Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian

By Archimandrite Justin Popovic

This Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian - published now, three years after the blessed repose of Venerable Fr. Justin (on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1979) - was written by the tireless Messenger of Christ forty years ago, in circumstances similar to those in which Christ's Holy Evangelist John wrote his sacred Epistles. The text of this 93-page soft-bound book has been translated from the Serbian

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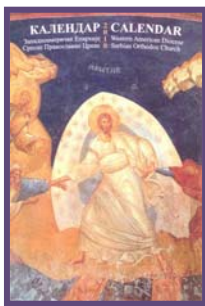


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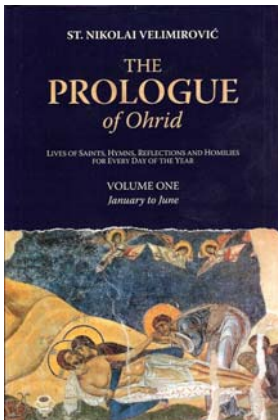
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