

## May 23, 2021: The Fourth Sunday of Easter (Healing of the Paralytic)

### Epistle: The Acts, 9:32-42:

*Now 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 bedridden 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.*

### Gospel: John 5:1-15:



*After this 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.*

Bethesda, in translation, *the House of mercy*, prefigures the Church and the Sacrament of Baptism or Holy Illumination. While the water of Bethesda was stirred by an angel, once a year, the water of Baptism receives the healing power (is stirred) not by an angel but by the Holy Spirit, who confers it the power of spiritual healing, the forgiveness of sins (original and personal), and not just once a year, but every time the Sacrament is celebrated. Moreover, the Church, through this first Sacrament and the other six as well, continues the (spiritual and physical) healing begun by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As the new *House of Mercy* and of salvation, the Church continues the redeeming work of Christ, the restoration of mankind.

For over two thousand years, our loving Lord and Savior has been asking every person: *"Do you want to be made well?"* The emphasis is on the first part of this question: *Do you want*, which means that wellness, restoration, salvation is not imposed even by God. Man has to feel the need, has to long for his spiritual and physical healing and, as a result, respond to the dialogue initiated by the question.

The message of this Sunday's gospel is that man's complete restoration begins with his spiritual healing (forgiveness): *"See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."* This *"worse thing"* is spending the rest of our lives in spiritual and physical sickness and turning this time into a missed opportunity for forgiveness and restoration.

Let us, therefore, become disciples and tell the world always and especially during this Paschal season that *"it was Jesus who had made us well."*

**Fr. George Bazgan**

## Sunday Service Attendance

Due to the continuing State of Emergency, and the recent measures imposed by the provincial authorities, the maximum number of people attending Church services is 15.

In order to give more people a chance to attend, we ask those who attended last Sunday, to skip this upcoming Sunday, establishing some sort of a rotation system. Also, only one person from the same family, please!

We apologize for this inconvenience and hope that the restrictions will continue to be relaxed in the near future.

Those who attend, are kindly asked to observe the recommendations of the experts, such as: wearing a mask, washing hands, social distancing, etc.

Thank you all and may God keep us safe!

## We are live streaming the Liturgy

As we continue to operate under these restrictions, we are live streaming the Divine Liturgy on You Tube.

To access the Sunday Services, [click here](#).

## Prayer at the time of pandemic

O Lord, our God, who are rich in mercy and, with Your wise care, guard our lives, listen to our prayer, receive our repentance for our sins, stop this pandemic, as You have ceased the punishment of the people in the days of King David. You who are the Physician of our souls and our bodies, give healing to those contaminated with this disease, hastily raising them from their bed of suffering, to glorify You, the Most Merciful Savior, and protect those who are healthy from any disease.

Bless, strengthen and shield, O Lord, with Your grace, all those who, with love of people and sacrifice, care for the sick at their homes or in hospitals. Remove all disease and suffering from the people and teach us to value life and health as gifts coming from You.

Grant us, O God, Your peace, and fill our hearts with unwavering faith in Your protection, with hope in Your help, and with love towards You and our neighbor.

For Yours is to show mercy and to save us, O our God, and to You we give glory: Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen!

## MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors extends a warm appeal to all supporters of our parish, asking them to pay their membership as soon as possible.

This way we can ensure that we have the necessary funds to fulfill our financial obligations during the Summer months and for the rest of the year as well.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!