



61st Year

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GIFTS AND MIRACLES

With the descent of the Holy Spirit gifts were given to the Apostles, similar to those of Christ, such as the gift of healing and of powers. And they were performing miracles, just like the Lord, two of which are mentioned in today's text of Acts: the cure of Anaeus and the resurrection of Tabatha.

Gifts of healing

Both the Gospel (Healing of the Paralytic etc.) as well as the epistle texts speak about this wondrous energy of the Holy Spirit which heals chronic and incurable illnesses (1 Cor. 12:4, 9:28).

Specifically today the cure of Anaeus is mentioned, who was for eight years paralyzed in bed, by the apostle Peter when he was passing by the city of Lydda of Asia Minor. The energy of divine grace with the word of the Apostle "Jesus Christ is healing you. Arise and set for yourself" (Acts 9:34), entered into the body of the paralytic and miraculously pulled back all the paralysis of his members.

How great this gift is if we think of how many people are suffering from incurable illnesses. Aside from the Apostles and the other Saints of our Church they had and have even after death, this precious gift of the Comforter, such as for example the beloved holy Unmercenaries but also many other Saints, old and contemporary (St. Charalambos, St. Nectarios, St. Ephraim).

Such great gifts are given, as Basil the Great mentions "to undefiled souls", in other words, to the souls of those people who have not been defiled by sin. Purity of soul and deep humility accompanied by living and unypocritical faith in the person of Christ and in the mystery of the Holy Trinity are the spiritual presuppositions in order for the healing grace of the Holy Spirit to be manifested. It is God who works miracles through the Saints. So for this reason also, the apostle Peter told the paralytic Aeneas: "Jesus Christ is healing you", in other words, Christ is curing you and not my own power.

Gifts of powers

The greatest miracle of the power of God is the brilliant Resurrection of the Lord. Because death is the unsurpassed suffering of man. There every human power is proven vain. However there also, the almighty power of the Most High is proven. God is master of life and of death with His double quality, as Creator and as Savior.

As Creator, God, gave life to man and the capability of immortality. As Savior He saved man, through the Cross, from death, since He freed him first from the cause of death, sin. He resurrected Lazarus, He himself resurrected from the dead, "having trampled down death by death and having granted life to those in the tombs". He gave the authority to the Apostles to also resurrect the dead. Just as the miracle of the resurrection of Tabitha which took place with the power of the prayer of the apostle Peter (Acts 9:40).

In order for someone to be resurrected from the dead, with the intervention of the power of God, before the general resurrection of all people, it occurs mainly for the faith in eternal life to be strengthened but also for the virtue of the reposed person to be rewarded. For example Tabatha whose good works moved the local Church of Joppa and the chief of the Apostles Peter was called to pray and resurrect her. So that the faithful Christians of Joppa could be both consoled and believe even more.

The gifts in our age

Even in our age the Church has the power to project such gifts. Of course, it depends also on the degree of faith of each believer. It is true that the science of medicine has advanced very much and the providing of medical help is much greater than in the past. However even this miracle of science for the sick people is in the plan of divine providence.

Basil the Great considers those exercising the medical service as a ministry of divine providence. Because, however there are always illnesses which constantly, even today, plague humanity, prayer in the healing power of divine grace and for the enlightenment of conscientious doctor scholars is always necessary. Both the intervention of God as well as science, which is indirectly from God, become cooperators in the comforting of human pain. With the highest goal being for man to be supported, and for the believer to also be comforted. In human pain spiritual powers are loosened which many times change man but also make the believer even stronger. Many people in the hardship of illness find the strength of faith and those who doubt, there strengthen their faith. This is furthermore also the purpose of miracles, for us to come to know God and to be assured of His presence, His providence and His strength. And in this manner the gifts of God continue being revealed for the glory of His name and for the benefit of people.

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