

and not having anything harsh» (St. Cyrill of Alexandria), in other words, a soft and lenient heart of the people of God is lacking. People are suffering from fear, loneliness, despair. Their condition reminds one of the paralytic of today's gospel before he was healed.

Today's man strays, just like the paralytic who was waiting for a man to throw him in the water, but a man for thirty eight years did not appear. So for this reason also exhausted in soul and body, he did not immediately answer Christ that he wants to become well, but he admitted the thought which was grieving him for years: "I don't have a man, no one is helping me."

The man of God, the child of Divine Grace, sends the love of Christ to everyone without awaiting any exchange, even though humanly he is awaiting something, but in the end, in his personal trial, "he is caught" by Jesus and is saved, sending to us also a message of optimism and life in Christ.

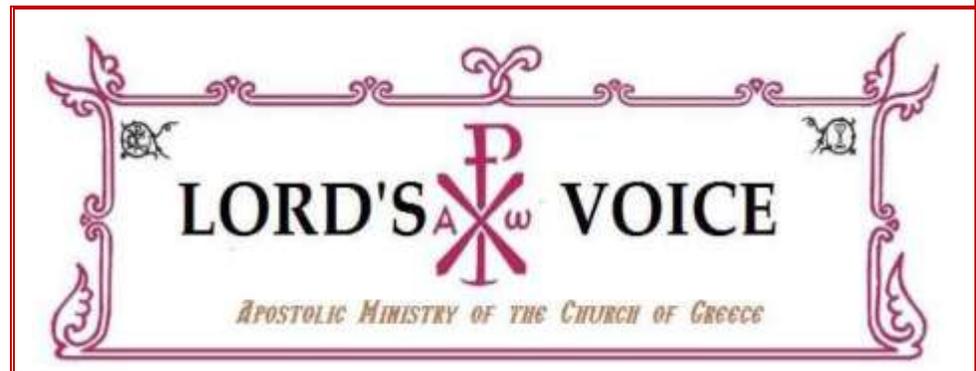
Archim. E. T.

SUNDAY MAY 11, 2014 Sunday of the Paralytic, Methodius & Cyril, Equal-to-the Apostles Illuminators of the Slavs, Renewal of Constantinople, Hieromartyr Mocius. , **TONE OF THE WEEK: Third Eothinon** Fifth Orthros Gospel

EPISTLE Acts of the Apostles 9:32-42, **GOSPEL** JOHN 5:1-15

NEXT SUNDAY MAY 18 2014 Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, Holy Martyrs: Peter, Dionysius, Andrew, Paul, Christina, Heraclius, Paulinus and Benedimus , Julian the Martyr, Euphrasia the Martyr of Nicea.

EPISTLE Acts of the Apostles 11:19-30, **GOSPEL** JOHN 4:5-42



62nd Year

MAY 11, 2014

PAMPHLET #19 (3180)

THE WORD OF GOD GIVES LIFE

Beloved brethren today's gospel passage speaks about the paralytic who was for thirty eight years next to the pool of Bethesda, near the sheep gate of Jerusalem. Christ passing by there, after a very brief dialogue, which He had with him, healed him.

This pool had five porticoes and a multitude of invalids surrounded it, because something quite strange occurred quite often. A visible or invisible angel, would descend and stir up the water, while the first sick person who would enter in would become well, no matter what he had.

The brief dialogue

In the brief dialogue with him, Christ asks the paralytic a strange question: "Do you wish to become well?" Who would not want to become well from such a paralysis? But here Christ shows that He doesn't want to force anyone's freedom. God doesn't want to make you follow Him by force. Consequently, the paralytic is he who responsibly wants to become well. He says that there is no man to throw him into the water at the appropriate moment. Christ however, urges him to carry, to take up his bed and walk. It's as if He's telling him, in other words, you don't have a man, but I became a man for you. You have me. So he got up and walked.

SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 5:1-15

At that time, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethesda which has five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water; whoever stepped in first after the troubling of the water was healed of whatever disease he had. One man was there, who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked.

Now that day was the sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who was cured, "It is the sabbath, it is not lawful for you to carry your pallet." But he answered them, "The man who healed me said to me, 'Take up your pallet, and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your pallet, and walk?'" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

The Jews

The Jews however reminded him that he is not allowed to lift up his bed on the day of the Sabbath. Obviously, they covered in a "seemingly legal manner" their hate and envy for Christ. The former paralytic answered that He who made him well told him to

do that. To their question who he was, he did know what to answer. Christ had disappeared in the big crowd. The Lord subsequently met him and told him to be careful from here on, so that he not sin, so that he not per chance suffer worse.

Here the Lord shows that the cause of the paralysis of this person was sin. The same thing doesn't always occur. In another case, when the Lord was asked if he was to blame or his parents' that he was born blind, He answered that neither was he to blame, nor his parents, but in this manner the works of God would be revealed in the blind man. Another time again, those advanced in virtue, were suffering from unjust trials, illnesses and adversities for their virtue to shine more and to benefit us also. And, the former paralytic admits that it is Jesus who granted him his health.

The interpretation of the gospel passage

In the interpretation of this gospel passage the Fathers make timely analogies which enlighten our mind. According to Zygavenos the pool of Bethesda is a type of the font of holy Baptism. Whereas then, often someone would enter the water and become well physically, now, everyone is invited to regeneration in Christ with Baptism, not only from the five porticoes, but from the five continents of the globe, without the Divine Grace being exhausted at all.

We Christians must respond to the coming of grace and live the mystery of faith among each other correctly. We all must carry the difficulties of every one, in such a way that our renewal in Christ is revealed. This is possible only in the Church, with our furthermore to the degree possible participation in the saving mysteries of Repentance and the Divine Eucharist, mainly of the second one.

People don't share things between each other today. Loving care and tenderness before all people, characteristically of the "soft