

The Sunday of the Paralytic

John 5:1-15

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. (KJV)

Hristos Voskrese! Vaistinu Voskrese!

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Hristos a inviat! Adevarat a inviat!

The man that lay by the pool at Bethesda was a man of enduring hope and great patience. The man in need of healing was beside the pool for thirty-eight years when Jesus approached him.

The man did not give in to despair and lose hope when he saw others being healed before him. He did not complain, blaspheme or say he was unfairly treated when approached by Jesus.

The man's patience and hope eventually bore great fruit. Jesus healed the man at the time Jesus felt appropriate. Attentive believers will benefit from this Gospel lesson on patience and hope.

The Church is celebrating Jesus' Resurrection. This is a time of great joy and renewal for believers. Faithful believers recognize the healing power of the Lord Jesus Christ in the present Gospel.

Each believer must care for the soul. Patience is critical in caring for the soul. We know from St. Luke's Gospel: "In your patience possess ye your souls." (Lk.21:19) Every believer has the responsibility to care for the soul daily throughout life.

Life eventually brings severe challenges to believers. A severe illness can strike a believer or a loved one. A sudden and unexpected job loss can occur. A loved one may experience difficulties with the law, drugs or alcohol abuse.

Trusting and waiting faithfully on God are necessary to deal with the challenges of life. The Holy Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Romans verifies and reassures believers to remain hopeful and patient.

Holy Apostle Paul told the Romans: “we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Rom.8:28)

During this time when the Church celebrates Jesus’ Resurrection, hope is renewed, proclaimed and emphasized. Believers only need look with eyes of faith to see the presence of the Risen Lord at work in daily life.

The Church’s divine services including the Scripture readings offer messages of hope and joy. The man healed by Jesus at the pool of Bethesda experienced joy through his healing.

Believers immersed in the Risen Christ experience immeasurable joy at this time in God’s Holy Church. Eyes of faith combined with hearts, minds and souls resting in the Risen Lord come to know the joy of this time in the Church.

Life’s calamities, hardships and challenges are put in perspective by the Risen Lord in God’s Holy Church. Believers are expected to remain faithful with firm belief in God’s goodness.

God is the God of Hope and Goodness. God is the Defeater of death and the way to eternal life. Believers need only look deep within the heart, mind and soul to experience the hope and healing available from the Risen Lord. (Lk.17:21)

God’s Holy Church offers the constant nourishment, teachings and support for believers to experience and grow in knowledge of the Resurrection. The Divine Liturgy enables believers to directly experience the Risen Lord.

These wise words in Isaiah were proclaimed long ago. “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

(Isaiah 40:31)

When challenges and crises arise in life, look to the Risen Lord with firm faith and hope. Have patience like the man at the pool of Bethesda who did not give up hope after thirty-eight years.

Draw strength and hope from the examples of healing and wholeness brought by Jesus Christ as recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Read the lives of the saints about the healings occurring through the centuries.

The Church recently celebrated the feast day of St. Basil of Ostrog. The miracles associated with St. Basil of Ostrog are very well documented. Pilgrims seeking healing from St. Basil’s intercession are numerous

Thank God for life’s challenges that draw believers closer to the Risen Christ. Thank God for ability to turn to the Lord God in hope and faith in all circumstances of life. Thank God for the joy that Christ is Risen!\

The Sunday of the Paralytic. St. Athanasius the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria. St. Michael. May 2/May 15, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic

