

RESOURCES FOR THE DOMESTIC CHURCH THE SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

THE TRISAGION PRAYERS

Parents: By the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us.

Response: Amen.

Christ is risen from the dead,* trampling death by death,* and to those in the tombs* giving life.
(3x)

+Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)

+Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, * now and for ever and ever.
Amen.

Trinity most holy, have mercy on us. Cleanse us of our sins, O Lord; pardon our transgressions, O Master; look upon our weaknesses and heal them, O Holy One; for the sake of Your Name.

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

+Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, * now and for ever and ever.
Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Parents: By the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us.

HYMN FOR MID-PENTECOST

Troparion, Tone 4: Blinded in the eyes of my soul,* I come to You, O Christ, like the man who was blind from birth,* and I cry in repentance:* You are the brilliant light of those in darkness.

EPISTLE & GOSPEL FOR THE SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC

EPISTLE: *Acts 16:16-34*

Now in these days as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, “These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.” She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much

annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe." The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

GOSPEL: JOHN 4:5 - 42

At that time, As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to

ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.

CATECHETICAL SUMMARY

Today the Church celebrates the Sunday of the Healing of the Blind Man. This man, who had been “born blind,” encountered Jesus when the Lord was leaving the Temple in Jerusalem. The man was, apparently, begging for money or food at the gate of the Temple and when Jesus spoke to him he listened and was obedient to the Lord’s command. Unlike the other figures in the Gospel account, this man alone had never seen the miraculous works of Christ, and yet, trusted in his word. We too, who have “not seen and yet believe” trust in the word of the Lord and follow in his ways. In this way, we, who were formerly blinded by sin, have begun to see through faith.

But, how do we trust in the Lord and follow in his ways? In the Epistle today, we are reminded on the conversion of Saul who, blinded by anger and his persecution of the Church, discovers that he is persecuting Christ himself and is called to join in the healing ministry of the Lord. We too, those who have been baptized into Christ and have received the vision of faith, are called to do “work[s] befitting [our] repentance.”

And what are those works which we are called to do if not to follow in the ways of Christ and Saint Paul, to bring healing to those who are spiritually blind through ignorance of Christ? To help those to whom God has called us to minister “to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the dominion of Satan to God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those sanctified by faith in me.”

Challenge:

We are told in our society today to keep religion out of the public sphere. We are told that we should not talk about religion in social settings, in school or at work. We are told that we should not proselytize and make converts to Christianity. We are told to leave others alone to follow their own path. But, if we are truly convinced that Christ is “the way, the truth and the life,” and this is true for all people, how can we possibly stay silent about something which impacts a person’s salvation?

In what ways can we bring the message of Christ to others in a way that respects their freedom?

THE FATHERS ON THE GOSPEL

He healed others by a word.... But the Lord bestowed sight on the one who was blind from birth—not by a word, but by an outward action. He did this neither casually nor simply because this was how it happened. He did it this way in order to show it was the same hand of God here that had also formed man at the beginning. And therefore when his disciples asked him why he

had been born blind, whether by his own fault or his parents', Jesus said, "Neither this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God might be manifested in him." The work of God is, after all, the forming of man. He did this by an outward action, as Scripture says, "And the Lord took clay from earth, and formed man." Notice here too how the Lord spit on the earth, and made clay and smeared it on his eyes, showing how the ancient creation was made. He was making clear to those who can understand, that this was the [same] hand of God through which man was formed from clay. For what the creating Word had neglected to form in the womb, this he supplied openly. He did this so that the works of God might be evident in him, and so that we would now seek for no other hand than that through which humanity was formed. Nor should we seek another Father, knowing that the hand of God which formed us in the beginning, and forms in the womb, has in the last times sought us lost ones out. He is gaining his own lost sheep and putting it on his shoulders and joyfully restoring it to the fold of life.

Saint Irenaeus, Against Heresies 5.15.2.