ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ
ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ
ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ & Μ. ΒΡΕΤΑΝΝΙΑΣ

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ΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ
THE WORD OF OUR LORD

ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΤΟΥ ΤΥΦΛΟΥ
24 Μαΐου 2020
Ἦχος πλ. α΄. Ἀριθμ. 21

SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN
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Συμεὼν ὁσίου στυλίτου, Κυριακοῦ ὁσίου, Μελετίου μάρτυρος
Symeon the stylite, Cyriacus the confessor, Meletius the martyr

ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Πράξ. ιστ΄, 16-34

Ἐν ταῖς ἡμεραῖς ἐκείναις, ἐγένετο δὲ πορευομένων ἡμῶν εἰς προσευχὴν παιδίσκην τινὰ ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα πύθωνος ἀπαντῆσαι ἡμῖν, ἥτις ἐργασίαν πολλὴν παρεῖχε τοῖς κυρίοις αὐτῆς μαντευομένη. αὕτη κατακολουθήσασα τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Σίλᾳ ἔκραζε λέγουσα· οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου εἰσίν, οἵτινες καταγγέλλουσιν ἡμῖν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας. τοῦτο δὲ ἐποίει ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας. διαπονηθεὶς δὲ ὁ Παῦλος καὶ ἐπιστρέψας τῷ πνεύματι εἶπε· παραγγέλλω σοι ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐξελθεῖν ἀπ᾽ αὐτῆς. καὶ ἐξῆλθεν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ. Ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ κύριοι αὐτῆς ὅτι ἐξῆλθεν ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῶν, ἐπιλαβόμενοι τὸν Παῦλον καὶ τὸν Σίλαν εἵλκυσαν εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας, καὶ προσαγαγόντες αὐτοὺς τοῖς στρατηγοῖς εἶπον· οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐκταράσσουσιν ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν Ἰουδαῖοι ὑπάρχοντες, καὶ καταγγέλλουσιν ἔθη ἃ οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν παραδέχεσθαι οὐδὲ ποιεῖν Ῥωμαίοις οὖσι. καὶ συνεπέστη ὁ ὄχλος κατ᾽ αὐτῶν. καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ περιρρήξαντες αὐτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια ἐκέλευον ῥαβδίζειν, πολλάς τε ἐπιθέντες αὐτοῖς πληγὰς ἔβαλον εἰς φυλακήν, παραγγείλαντες τῷ δεσμοφύλακι ἀσφαλῶς τηρεῖν αὐτούς· ὃς παραγγελίαν τοιαύτην εἰληφὼς ἔβαλεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν ἐσωτέραν φυλακὴν καὶ τοὺς πόδας αὐτῶν ἠσφαλίσατο εἰς τὸ ξύλον. Κατὰ δὲ τὸ μεσονύκτιον Παῦλος καὶ Σίλας προσευχόμενοι ὕμνουν τὸν Θεόν· ἐπηκροῶντο δὲ αὐτῶν οἱ δέσμιοι. ἄφνω δὲ σεισμὸς ἐγένετο μέγας, ὥστε σαλευθῆναι τὰ θεμέλια τοῦ δεσμωτηρίου, ἀνεῴχθησάν τε παραχρῆμα αἱ θύραι πᾶσαι καὶ πάντων τὰ δεσμὰ ἀνέθη. ἔξυπνος δὲ γενόμενος ὁ δεσμοφύλαξ καὶ ἰδὼν ἀνεῳγμένας τὰς θύρας τῆς φυλακῆς, σπασάμενος μάχαιραν ἔμελλεν ἑαυτὸν ἀναιρεῖν, νομίζων ἐκπεφευγέναι τοὺς δεσμίους. ἐφώνησε δὲ φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ὁ Παῦλος λέγων· μηδὲν πράξῃς σεαυτῷ κακόν· ἅπαντες γάρ ἐσμεν ἐνθάδε. αἰτήσας δὲ φῶτα εἰσεπήδησε, καὶ ἔντρομος γενόμενος προσέπεσε τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Σίλᾳ,καὶ προαγαγὼν αὐτοὺς ἔξω ἔφη· κύριοι, τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν ἵνα σωθῶ; οἱ δὲ εἶπον· πίστευσον ἐπὶ τὸν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, καὶ σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου. καὶ ἐλάλησαν αὐτῷ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ. καὶ παραλαβὼν αὐτοὺς ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τῆς νυκτὸς ἔλουσεν ἀπὸ τῶν πληγῶν, καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ αὐτοῦ πάντες παραχρῆμα, ἀναγαγών τε αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ παρέθηκε τράπεζαν, καὶ ἠγαλλιάσατο πανοικὶ πεπιστευκὼς τῷ Θεῷ.

EPISTLE READING

Acts 16: 16-34

IN THOSE DAYS, as we apostles were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by soothsaying. She followed Paul and us, crying, «These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.» And this she did for many days. But Paul was annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, «I charge 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 gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the rulers; and when they had brought them to the magistrates they said, «These men are Jews and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice.» The crowd joined in attacking them; and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake,

so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and every one's fetters were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, «Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.» And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, «Men, what must I do to be saved?» And they said, «Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.» And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family. Then he brought them up into his house, and set food before them; and he rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God.

ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Ἰωάν. θ΄, 1-38

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, παράγων εἶδεν ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετῆς. Καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες· ῥαββί, τίς ἥμαρτεν, οὗτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῇ; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· οὔτε οὗτος ἥμαρτεν οὔτε οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῇ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. ἐμὲ δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἕως ἡμέρα ἐστίν· ἔρχεται νὺξ ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι. ὅταν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ᾖ, φῶς εἰμι τοῦ κόσμου. ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἔπτυσε χαμαὶ καὶ ἐποίησε πηλὸν ἐκ τοῦ πτύσματος, καὶ ἐπέχρισε τὸν πηλὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τοῦ τυφλοῦ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ὕπαγε νίψαι εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν τοῦ Σιλωάμ, ὃ ἑρμηνεύεται ἀπεσταλμένος. ἀπῆλθεν οὖν καὶ ἐνίψατο, καὶ ἦλθε βλέπων. Οἱ οὖν γείτονες καὶ οἱ θεωροῦντες αὐτὸν τὸ πρότερον ὅτι τυφλὸς ἦν, ἔλεγον· οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ καθήμενος καὶ προσαιτῶν; ἄλλοι ἔλεγον ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν· ἄλλοι δὲ ὅτι ὅμοιος αὐτῷ ἐστιν. ἐκεῖνος ἔλεγεν ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι. ἔλεγον οὖν αὐτῷ· πῶς ἀνεῴχθησάν σου οἱ ὀφθαλμοί; ἀπεκρίθη ἐκεῖνος καὶ εἶπεν· ἄνθρωπος λεγόμενος Ἰησοῦς πηλὸν ἐποίησε καὶ ἐπέχρισέ μου τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ εἶπέ μοι· ὕπαγε εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν τοῦ Σιλωὰμ καὶ νίψαι· ἀπελθὼν δὲ καὶ νιψάμενος ἀνέβλεψα. εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ· ποῦ ἐστιν ἐκεῖνος; λέγει· οὐκ οἶδα. Ἄγουσιν αὐτὸν πρὸς τοὺς Φαρισαίους, τόν ποτε τυφλόν. ἦν δὲ σάββατον ὅτε τὸν πηλὸν ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἀνέῳξεν αὐτοῦ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς. πάλιν οὖν ἠρώτων αὐτὸν καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι πῶς ἀνέβλεψεν. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πηλὸν ἐπέθηκέ μου ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, καὶ ἐνιψάμην, καὶ βλέπω. ἔλεγον οὖν ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων τινές· οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἔστι παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅτι τὸ σάββατον οὐ τηρεῖ. ἄλλοι ἔλεγον· πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλὸς τοιαῦτα σημεῖα ποιεῖν; καὶ σχίσμα ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς. λέγουσι τῷ τυφλῷ πάλιν· σὺ τί λέγεις περὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἤνοιξέ σου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν ὅτι προφήτης ἐστίν. οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι περὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι τυφλὸς ἦν καὶ ἀνέβλεψεν, ἕως ὅτου ἐφώνησαν τοὺς γονεῖς αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀναβλέψαντος καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτοὺς λέγοντες· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς ὑμῶν, ὃν ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι τυφλὸς ἐγεννήθη; πῶς οὖν ἄρτι βλέπει; ἀπεκρίθησαν δὲ αὐτοῖς οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπον· οἴδαμεν ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς ἡμῶν καὶ ὅτι τυφλὸς ἐγεννήθη· πῶς δὲ νῦν βλέπει οὐκ οἴδαμεν, ἢ τίς ἤνοιξεν αὐτοῦ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἡμεῖς οὐκ οἴδαμεν· αὐτὸς ἡλικίαν ἔχει, αὐτὸν ἐρωτήσατε, αὐτὸς περὶ ἑαυτοῦ λαλήσει. ταῦτα εἶπον οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐφοβοῦντο τοὺς Ἰουδαίους· ἤδη γὰρ συνετέθειντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἵνα, ἐάν τις αὐτὸν ὁμολογήσῃ Χριστόν, ἀποσυνάγωγος γένηται. διὰ τοῦτο οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπον ὅτι ἡλικίαν ἔχει, αὐτὸν ἐρωτήσατε. ἐφώνησαν οὖν ἐκ δευτέρου τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὃς ἦν τυφλός, καὶ εἶπον αὐτῷ· δὸς δόξαν τῷ Θεῷ· ἡμεῖς οἴδαμεν ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος ἁμαρτωλός ἐστιν. ἀπεκρίθη οὖν ἐκεῖνος καὶ εἶπεν· εἰ ἁμαρτωλός ἐστιν οὐκ οἶδα· ἓν οἶδα, ὅτι τυφλὸς ὢν ἄρτι βλέπω. εἶπον δὲ αὐτῷ πάλιν· τί ἐποίησέ σοι; πῶς ἤνοιξέ σου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς; ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς· εἶπον ὑμῖν ἤδη, καὶ οὐκ ἠκούσατε· τί πάλιν θέλετε ἀκούειν; μὴ καὶ ὑμεῖς θέλετε αὐτοῦ μαθηταὶ γενέσθαι; ἐλοιδόρησαν αὐτὸν καὶ εἶπον· σὺ εἶ μαθητὴς ἐκείνου· ἡμεῖς δὲ τοῦ Μωϋσέως ἐσμὲν μαθηταί. ἡμεῖς οἴδαμεν ὅτι Μωϋσεῖ λελάληκεν ὁ Θεός· τοῦτον δὲ οὐκ οἴδαμεν πόθεν ἐστίν. ἀπεκρίθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ θαυμαστόν ἐστιν, ὅτι ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε πόθεν ἐστί, καὶ ἀνέῳξέ μου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς. οἴδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ἁμαρτωλῶν ὁ Θεὸς οὐκ ἀκούει, ἀλλ' ἐάν τις θεοσεβὴς ᾖ καὶ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιῇ, τούτου ἀκούει. ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος οὐκ ἠκούσθη ὅτι ἤνοιξέ τις ὀφθαλμοὺς τυφλοῦ γεγεννημένου. εἰ μὴ ἦν οὗτος παρὰ Θεοῦ, οὐκ ἠδύνατο ποιεῖν οὐδέν.ἀπεκρίθησαν καὶ εἶπον αὐτῷ· ἐν ἁμαρτίαις σὺ ἐγεννήθης ὅλος, καὶ σὺ διδάσκεις ἡμᾶς; καὶ ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω. Ἤκουσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω, καὶ εὑρὼν αὐτὸν εἶπεν αὐτῷ· σὺ πιστεύεις εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ; ἀπεκρίθη ἐκεῖνος καὶ εἶπε· καὶ τίς ἐστι, Κύριε, ἵνα πιστεύσω εἰς αὐτόν; εἶπε δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· καὶ ἑώρακας αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λαλῶν μετὰ σοῦ ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν. ὁ δὲ ἔφη· πιστεύω, Κύριε· καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ.

GOSPEL READING

John 9: 1-38

At that time, as Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, «Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?» Jesus answered, «It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.» As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay,

saying to him, «Go, wash in the pool of Siloam» (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, «Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?» Some said, «It is he»; others said, «No, but he is like him.» He said, «I am the man.» They said to him, «Then how were your eyes opened?» He answered, «The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so 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 clay and opened his eyes. The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, «He put clay on my eyes and I washed, and I see.» Some of the Pharisees said, «This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath.» But others said, «How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?» There was a division among them. So they again said to the blind man, «What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?» 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 how he now sees we do not know, 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 feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess him to be Christ he was to 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 said to him, «Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner.» He answered, «Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I 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 too want to become his disciples?» And 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, «Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.» They answered him, «You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?» And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, «Do you believe in the Son of man?» He answered, «And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?» Jesus said to him, «You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.» He said, «Lord, I believe»; and he worshiped him.

ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΥ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑΤΟΣ

«Εσύ πιστεύεις στον Υιό του Θεού;» (*Ιωάννης* 9:35)

Το σημερινό ανάγνωσμα του Ευαγγελίου περιγράφει ένα από τα μεγαλύτερα θαύματα του Χριστού που μαρτυρεί αδιάψευστα την θεότητά Του και Τον κηρύττει Πλάστη και Δημιουργό μας. Ο άνθρωπος που συνάντησε ο Χριστός ήταν τυφλός εκ γενετής. Είχε γεννηθεί χωρίς μάτια. Ο Χριστός του έπλασε τους οφθαλμούς. Δεν τον θεράπευσε απλά, δημιούργησε. «Έβαλε πάνω στα μάτια μου πηλό, νίφτηκα και βλέπω» ομολογεί ο τυφλός (9:15). Ο Χριστός μας λέει στην πράξη εγώ είμαι ο Δημιουργός. Με τον ίδιο τρόπο ο Τριαδικός μας Θεός είχε πλάσει στην αρχή τον άνθρωπο. (*Γέν.* 2:7) Ο ίδιος Θεός τώρα με λάσπη δημιουργεί τους οφθαλμούς και χαρίζει το φως και την σωτήρια του σε αυτόν που τα είχε στερηθεί από την γέννησή του.

Όταν οι Φαρισαίοι αμφισβητούσαν το θαύμα αυτός φωτισμένος από τον Κύριο, ομολογεί την Αλήθεια και απολογείται θαρραλέα: «Ξέρουμε πως ο Θεός τούς αμαρτωλούς δεν τους ακούει, αλλά αν κάποιος σέβεται τον Θεό και κάνει το θέλημά Του, αυτόν Τον ακούει. Από τότε που έγινε ο κόσμος δεν ακούστηκε ποτέ ν' ανοίξει κανείς τα μάτια ενός γεννημένου τυφλού. Αν Αυτός δεν ήταν από το Θεό δε θα μπορούσε να κάνει τίποτα» (9:31- 33). Δογματίζει ο πρώην τυφλός. Ο Θεός ακούει τις προσευχές αυτών που Τον σέβονται και υπακούουν τις εντολές Του. Μόνο σε μία περίπτωση ο Θεός ακούει τις προσευχές των αμαρτωλών, όταν μετανοήσουν και πουν Θεέ μου συγχώρεσε με, βοήθησε με να μετανοήσω και να αλλάξω ζωή, τότε ακούει ο Θεός και βοηθάει. Δεν εισακούονται οι προσευχές μας όταν ζούμε στην αμαρτία, όταν είμαστε αμετανόητοι και ανεξομολόγητοι.

Ο Ιησούς όταν τον πέταξαν έξω οι Φαρισαίοι πήγε τον βρήκε και του είπε: «Εσύ πιστεύεις στον Υιό του Θεού;» (9:35). Στην ερώτηση αυτή κρύβεται όλο το Μυστήριο της πίστης μας. Δεν τον ρωτάει ο Κύριος αν πιστεύει στο Θεό, αόριστα ή αν πιστεύει σε μία ανώτερη δύναμη. Ο Κύριος τον ρωτάει αν πιστεύει στο Χριστό, αν πιστεύει στον Υιό του Θεού του Ζώντος. (*Ματθ.* 16:16). Και το κάνει γιατί θέλει να μας βοηθήσει να μάθουμε να πιστεύουμε σωστά. Να πιστεύουμε στο Χριστό και όλα να τα ζητάμε στο Όνομα του Χριστού. Να μεταλαβαίνουμε το Σώμα και το Αίμα του Χριστού. Να ζητάμε την συγχώρεση των αμαρτιών μας από τον Χριστό, στην Εκκλησία Του, από τους ιερείς Του. Γιά να ομολογούμε απόλυτα ότι ο Χριστός είναι ο Κύριός μας, ο Θεός και Σωτήρας μας.

«Πιστεύω Κύριε» ομολόγησε ο πρώην τυφλός και Τον προσκύνησε (9:36-38). Τη στιγμή που όλοι οι άλλοι στο Ευαγγέλιο Τον είχαν απορρίψει αυτός προσκυνεί την θεότητα Του.

Ο Χριστός είναι ο Θεός ο Άναρχος, ο Αιώνιος που έγινε Θεάνθρωπος, νίκησε τον θάνατο, την αμαρτία και τον διάβολο και μας χαρίζει ζωή αιώνιο και υγεία, ανάσταση και κατά χάριν θέωση. Ο Χριστός είναι ο Ζωοδότης μας. Αυτός θα μας αναστήσει όλους μιά μέρα. «Νεκρός ουδείς εν τω μνήματι.» Θα ανοίξουν μιά μέρα όλοι οι τάφοι. Αλλά εξαρτάται από μας αν ο Θεός θα είναι παράδεισος ή κόλαση, αμοιβή ή τιμωρία. Όλοι αργά ή γρήγορα θα πεθάνουμε και θα δούμε την δόξα του Θεού στο πρόσωπο του Χριστού, είτε σαν φως που θα μας φωτίζει και θα μας ζεσταίνει, είτε σαν φωτιά που θα μας κατακαίει. Εξαρτάται από την δική μας ανταπόκριση στην αγάπη του Χριστού.

Να μας ελεήσει ο Κύριος να Τον δούμε από τώρα, σε τούτη τη ζωή. Γιατί αν δεν τον δούμε τον Χριστό και δεν Τον συναντήσουμε σε αυτόν τον κόσμο, μέσα στην Εκκλησία Του δηλαδή, αν δεν Τον δούμε στην Βάπτιση, στην Μετάνοια, στην Εξομολόγηση, στην Θεία Κοινωνία και στο πρόσωπο του συνανθρώπου μας, δεν θα Τον δούμε ούτε μετά τον θάνατο μας στην άλλη ζωή.

Να Τον δούμε τον Χριστό πρώτα εδώ, τώρα, σε τούτη την ζωή και να Τον έχουμε συντροφιά στον αιώνα, αυτός να είναι ο απώτερος και πρώτιστος σκοπός της ζωής μας. Αμήν.

Πρωτοπρεσβ. Φώτιος Μπίθας

SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

Man was created by the Word of God in His image and likeness, to share in the life of God. He was initially given dominion over all plants and animals of the earth, *"everything that has the breath of life,"* (*Gen.* 1:30) and the paradise, in which God walked and talked with Adam. This plan was thwarted by the disobedience of Adam and Eve, and the image and likeness to God in them was marred by sin,

The Word of God being conceived and born of the Theotokos, becoming a real man in our historical time; the Son of Man Who shows the image and likeness of God in Himself. And it is this reality which the three gospel readings of the last two Sundays, and today's Gospel reading, put before us. Note that it is before His Passion and Resurrection, that the Lord heals the Paralytic and speaks to the Samaritan woman. The first had been sick 38 years but had *"no man to help him.'* After he was cured and met Jesus again, the Lord admonished him *"do not sin again, lest something worse happen to you."* And to the Jews who objected about His healing on the Sabbath He answered: *"My Father is working until now, and I am working."*

When the Samaritan woman affirmed *"that the Messiah is coming who will teach us all things,"* Jesus simply replied *"I Who speak to you, am He."*

And today, this poor man who was blind from birth, was healed by the hands of the Lord forming clay from the dust of the earth and His spittle. This repeated the action of creation of Adam (*Gen.* 2:7) It was the obedience of the blind man, manifesting his faith in this Man he could not see - Who ordered him to the pool of Siloam to wash his eyes - which gave him his sight.

Most of us possess all the normal physical faculties, as did most of the Jews in Jesus' day. The Gospel is read to us in church; our Christian way of life and thinking is explained further in the Letters of St Paul and other Apostles, also read in church, along with prophecies and lessons from the Old Testament. If we deliberately come late to the Liturgy, and always miss the readings and sermon, what do we know of Christ? Are we obedient to the Church He founded to bring us to life? Do we know more of the Christ than the Jews who interrogated the Blind Man and his parents after he was given sight by Jesus?

Which of us would not try to appease and evade the real malice of those in authority who had fixed Christ and His followers as the target to be punished, to be shunned by all, like publicans or lepers? The parents answer truthfully, but prudently avoid embroilment in the trouble that threatens. We have every indication, from cumulative signals small and great, that being a Christian today in many parts of the world invites persecution, even to death. So we keep a low profile to avoid trouble. But when it comes, what defence can we give of our faith, or reason for our hope in Christ?

This man, who knows nothing at all having been blind from birth, sticks firmly to the truth of his story, and resists attempts to make him abjure His Saviour from blindness. He sees the Truth clearly and confesses it. Let us no longer neglect the Christian practice of regular daily prayer, study, and attending church services, so that we too, seeing the Light of the World like the man born blind, may fall down before Him, in grateful worship rather than fearful despair, when we meet the Him at the end of our life.

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