

spirit of the Law, in other words, not with external, physical compliance, but with a spiritual effort to abstain from sin and cultivate virtue.

And Christ does something else on purpose. When later on He meets that person whom He healed, He does not boast, but neutrally tells him: "Be careful now that you have become healthy, don't sin any more so that nothing worse happens to you!" Is there something worse than being bedridden and lying flat for thirty eight years? Naturally there is. The eternity of hell! Christ addresses to us the experience of these years of misfortune, so that their recollection comprises an element of comparison and deterrence of whatsoever deviation from the divine will.

Brethren, even "the changing of the law" (Heb. 7:12) occurs, when this proves saving for the person. And the only philanthropic legislator knows, moved out of His ineffable love, to act so as to make each person's salvation, the supreme law, handling our life with discretion, serving the expediency of our sanctification!

Archimandrite I. N

**SUNDAY, MAY 22, 2016 SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC**, *Basiliscus the Martyr, Bishop of Comana, Holy New Martyrs Demetrius and Paul of Tripoli, John-Vladimir, Ruler of Serbia*

**tone OF THE WEEK: Tone Three**

**EOTHINON :** Fifth Eothinon

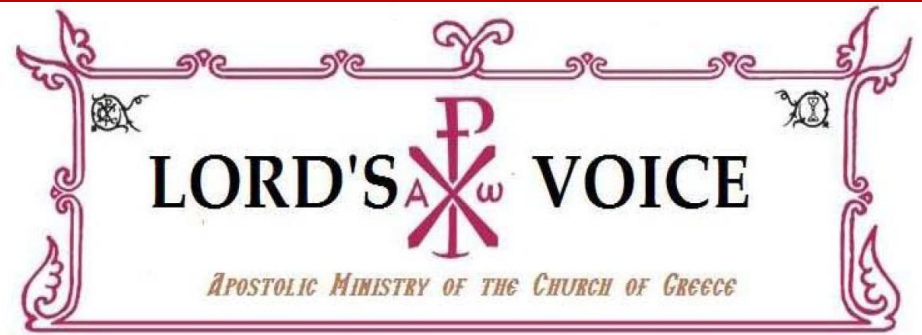
**EPISTLE:** *Acts of the Apostles 9:32-42*

**GOSPEL:** *John 5:1-15*

**NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 29, 2016 SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN**, *Theodosia the Virgin-Martyr of Tyre, St. Theodosia, Virgin-Martyr of Constantinople, Andrew the New Martyr of Argentes, John of Smyrna the New Martyr.*

**EPISTLE:** *Acts of the Apostles 11:19-30*

**GOSPEL:** *John 4:5-42*



64<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

MAY 22, 2016

PAMPHLET # 21 (3286)

## DISTINCTIONS AND AGENDAS

How many times has a denouncing word been heard against distinctions and expediencies! How many times, even violent struggles, have been undertaken so that the violation of equality would cease and for equanimity and justice to reign! How many times have we felt on a personal level frustration choking us, as we suspect or distinguish injustice against us, so that someone else can be favored and be preferred! And all these things are just emotions and are justified in the framework of human logic. However a danger lurks in these!

Which? The danger of these - and only these prevailing - in our heart, resulting in every other emotion being choked, since embittered by the whatsoever injustice, the whatsoever isolation, our whatsoever depreciation, we are led to see the other person with suspicion, as a competitor, probably also as an enemy. And we ascertain that this prevails in our society, as a result of the superficiality and the recklessness with which the denouncing word is pronounced, especially when it is serving a party expediency, with the direct and first result being the division of society, the bias, the blow against social mutual support.

### Distinctions

Today's gospel passage comes to justify the different way of action when contradictory conditions must be served or for priorities to be supported. In any case, each person is a unique and unrepeatable personality, so for this reason massiveness does not characterize the way

## SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC

### THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO 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.

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of God's action, but distinction. The first distinction which occurs is from Christ himself. Near the sheep pool of Jerusalem, - which is called thus, because from there the sheep would enter for the sacrifice in the Temple of Solomon - there was a formulated well, Bethesda, in other words, "house of mercy". Around this were five arched shelters, where many

people with various illnesses were lying. Everyone awaited the angelic presence that would disturb the water, so that the first one who would enter in, would become well.

Among the multitude of sick people, Christ distinguished one who was paralyzed and was lying there for thirty eight years! After a private dialogue He healed him. Among the multitude of sick people He healed only one! Of course, this one was bedridden for so many years, but why did the Lord heal only him? Would His miraculous power be exhausted if He made all the others well also? Illness and death, in one word corruption, became familiar to human nature as a result of sin. As soon as the first created humans transgressed the divine will, they inherited the results of their choice! And nevertheless, Holy God knows how to turn even this into a training, since especially with illness, a cause is given, if not an opportunity for patience and philosophy, so that a person can alter his character also for the better. Saint John Chrysostom furthermore says that the person who daily visits hospitals or a cemetery is not able to sin! So thus, the one is healed, who doesn't have anything else to be benefited by his illness and the rest are left, who still had a lot to learn!

But also the way in which the miracle is activated comprises a distinction. Usually, before the miracle, Christ demands faith. Now He approaches the paralytic and makes an odd question: "Do you want to become well?" And the person chiseled by the patience of so many years, with courteousness and without snapping at the Lord for the odd question, answers all that the Gospel mentions. And the miracle occurs immediately after, a proof that the trial of patience compensates the faith! Our endurance, and furthermore the many year long one, in whatsoever affliction, is admired very much in God's eyes!

### The expediency of our sanctification

When our Christ heals the paralytic, He gives him a commandment: "Get up, pick, up your bed and walk". He does this so that the Jews can see the former paralytic carrying his bed on the Sabbath day and to be informed of the miracle, but also for them to understand that they must understand the regulations of the Law differently. Not with attachment to the letter, but in the