



## ***Sunday of the Paralytic John 5:1-15***

*“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...”*

Fernando visited the community this week and he brought food and had some time to spare among us for a little while.

He knows the community from the very beginning, and he’s been involved in many and different ways. He gave us a word about St John’s and we thought his word was prophetic. In a way that opens the present for us with meaning and purpose and remembers also for us the past and that there is a future. He thinks that St John’s is a sign of real life in a time when the world creates a system that is trying to put everybody in a box and control it. A sign that is no less than a miracle. A place where people are seen and welcome as persons. And being personal asks for simplicity in a community that is not afraid not to become great but has the faith of being faithful in small things.

To receive this word within today’s gospel means for us that the call is to be a community where the waters are stirred and troubled in order for all to become well. The place where the angel is welcome together with the poor and the hungry, together with those who are sick with all kind of diseases, to trouble our life with healing. The church manifests itself in the community that is not resistant to the stirring of the waters, where the flow of the waters is clear and embraces everybody, where we don’t build barriers or barrages to turn the hearts of man into deserted places, but rather we are moved with the flow, in the middle of the whirlpool that spirals the human life into the kingdom.

But how is this possible within the community that sees so much paralysis of the body and the spirit, in a community that encounters the sickness of the time in so many ways? In a community where people who are ill find no recovery at times. The place that welcomes people with a sickness that never heals. Within the community that sees the effects of our sins firsthand, without gloves.

Just on Saturday, we were visited by M. who was in rough shape. He had suffered cutting injuries overnight and had been hit with a baseball bat because of the sickness of addictions. He could hardly move and although he was hungry, he could not eat because of pain and deprivation of sleep. Later, when I was talking to George about him (we have known M. for 10 years), he was wondering how it was possible that he was still alive. We had seen him in similar situations many times before, and these days we hear so often of people we know perishing

before their time. M. is young, very young. We don't think he reached 30 yet. However, M is not singular in the community. We all know people with life threatening sickness and people who live under the threat of death. People who live on the edge, with a broken life, that is not valued by the world in which we live. The community is indeed surrounded by people who lie ill in porticos around the fountain. Who is going to reach the water first?

What surprised us about M. on Saturday morning was not the fact that he was hungry, beaten up and had a deep cut on his hand. We saw him before in similar situations. The miracle was that he was able to remember the church and come for healing and for a personal interaction in which goodness was shared. In that terrible place of distress in which he found himself and in physical pain, M. was kind enough to receive help and not to fight for revenge and to curse. But rather, to receive food and care for his wounds and clothes because he was soaking wet. As his wounds were cleaned, M. also made a confession and said he should change his friends. And at the end he blessed the community. M. had many troubles in his life so far and struggles with a sickness that seems to have no cure, and yet his heart is kind enough to bless God in a time where life has left him naked, broken and with no hope for healing.

M. does not come only for receiving care but sometimes he sneaks into the chapel and prays in silence. It is the way in which his heart, while being so broken, heals with blessing.

Healing does happen within the community in different ways, and at times it is given to us to witness little miracles. In the end it heals us all in our heart. And this is the real miracle. It really does. It moves us with the new waters. It quenches the fiery sin from within and crushes the head of the serpent that lurked in the waters of old of our soul. Because Christ is risen, and He is in our midst. It might seem at times that our community is going against the current, but it is not so. It is just the illusion of perspective. Today, the waters are flowing and are life giving in Christ's resurrection. It is the world that fights against it with the old current. And this movement looks like a black hole of our time. But this is the place where the whirlpool of new waters is manifested the place where the community dwells. And we see all around the community who lie sick in porticos being flooded by life giving current.

*The waters saw Thee O Lord, the waters saw Thee and were afraid....*

### **A note of clarification about last week's bulletin on House of Grace.**

House of Grace is in Haifa ,Israel. It began almost at the same time as St. John The Compassionate Mission. In fact, St. John The Compassionate Mission was inspired by House of Grace. Since the war started on October 7/2023 we have kept in touch with Agnes and wanted to show our support to them during this difficult time in Israeli society and among the Palestinian population. If anyone wishes to send any financial support to them, they are free to do so. Sometimes the problems in the world seem enormous, but we can always make a difference when we embrace people personally.



Announcements:

**Tuesday morning** there is a workshop for anyone interested in doing visitation in hospitals, shut in, nursing homes. This is a training workshop led by Community Care. You will receive a certificate and be part of this important ministry of the mission. If you are interested to join, please speak to father Nicolaie.

**Tuesday 7 pm** : Psalm study through Zoom continues, (ps 68)

**Wednesday 6:30 pm** – Liturgy for Mid Pentecost

**Friday 7 am** - Divine Liturgy

Father Nicolaie's words from Holy Week are available in a booklet at the back. It is recommended to read them prayerfully and not to forget them as we journey towards Pentecost.

Please use the antidoron bag ...also found at the back. If you don't know what the antidoron is for please speak to me (Frank).

The special time for prayer and community life that we lived during lent now continues throughout the Pascha season as we journey towards the great feast of Pentecost.

Who ever is thirsty let them come and drink

from the Divine Services and the different opportunities offered here to deepen our understanding of the orthodox faith, not only on Sunday but almost every day of the week here. No one in our community has a reason to feel alone in their struggle to live the orthodox faith.

**YOUNG VOLUNTEERS  
(AGES 16 - 35)  
NEEDED FOR  
YOUTH-SENIOR  
GIFT EXCHANGE**

*Alleviate isolation while learning from the wisdom and experiences of our elders.*



*Gain valuable skills, make lasting memories, and foster empathy, respect, and community engagement.*

*Join us in creating a brighter future for seniors and young people.*

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE!  
GREAT OPPORTUNITY  
FOR SCHOOL  
VOLUNTEER HOURS!**

*Connect with seniors, offering practical help and companionship*



*Forge inter-generational connections through visiting seniors and creating memoirs of their life stories.*

**Virtual training  
takes place  
May 28 @ 10:00 AM**

**ST. JOHN**  
THE COMPASSIONATE  
MISSION

  
*Compassionate*  
Community Care

**Get in touch  
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We are an apostolate of the ecumenical patriarchate "Mother Church of Christ's poor" under  
the Omophorion of Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

St. Silouan Chapel, May 26, 2024

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