

Adult Religious Education (Bible Study) - Monday, May 14th @ 7:00 p.m. Come join us and learn about the richness of our faith through Scripture. Bring your bibles. We will be using the Orthodox Study Bible. For more information call (773) 334-4515 and speak to Father John.

Looking for volunteers for the Narthex Committee— The Parish Council is looking for individuals who can volunteer their time in the Narthex on Sunday and Major Holidays. If interested please see the president of the Parish Council—Nick Hatzopoulos

Mommy and Me will be meeting on Friday, May 18th @ 10:30 am in the pre-school room. God's Creation lesson and craft. If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Stephane Collopy at sacollopy@gmail.com

All GOYans are welcome to join the St. Andrew/St. George GOYA trip to **Six Flags Great America on Saturday, June 3!** Tickets are \$60 if you RSVP to chicagogoya@gmail.com by June 1st to reserve your spot! If you do not RSVP, we will not purchase a ticket for you, and you will have to pay an extra \$15 at the gate should you still like to attend. Food to be purchased individually at the park.

Donations for the Boutique at St. Andrew's Greek Fest- Saturday, July 7th & Sunday, July 8th. This is a popular destination because of unique items for sale. Please drop off gently used items at the church office. Thank you!

*Jewelry and accessories *Housewares *Toys and books *Vinyl records, CDs, tapes *Religious items

St. Andrew's has Graves for Sale @ Elmwood Cemetery, Section 3B. Please call the church for additional information if you are interested (773) 334-4515

Senior Circle will meet on Monday, June 4th at Psistaria restaurant at noon. For reservations, please call Mrs. Alexopoulos (847) 998-5232. All are welcome!



PHILOPTOCHOS

Χριστός ανέστη! Αληθώς ανέστη!

Wednesday, May 16th: Paximathia baking in the kitchen for upcoming memorials for Tom Pappas and Presbyteria Kutulas. Please make sure you let us know if you will be joining us or baking at home.

Friday, May 18th: Sarah's Circle Sack Lunch making 10:30: Please meet in the kitchen.

April 22nd- May 20th: Dreamcatchers Personal Items Drive: It's easy to help women in need by bringing the following travel sized items only, in a ziplock bag: Lotion, Toothpaste, Toothbrush, Deodorant, Hand Sanitizer, and Body Wash. Containers are located in the foyer of the auditorium for drop off anytime or at the Philoptochos table after church. If you would prefer a monetary donation, \$6 will pay for an entire kit. Please make your check out to SAWPS. Thank you for your generosity in supporting the eradication of human trafficking via The Dreamcatchers Foundation. If you have any questions please contact vonnies@karafotias.com, 630-378-4878 or sacollopy@gmail.com.

Tuesday, May 22nd: General Meeting 6:30 President's Room: Please plan to join us as we plan for the Picnic Bake Sale, Pentecost and end of the year dinner on Tuesday, June 19th.

Welcome to Saint Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church

"Proclaiming Orthodoxy Since 1926"

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Fr. John N. Kalomas – Proistamenos

Fr. Athanasios Minetos - Associate Priest

Fr. John Kutulas – In Loving Memory



SUNDAY, MAY 13, 2018 (Sunday of the Blind Man)

STEWARDSHIP QUOTE – *What Constitutes A Good Steward Of God?
One Who Is Not Distracted By His Surroundings, Nor What He Gives. He Sees What His Gifts Are And He Gives Generously To All That He Embraces.*

HAPPY

MOTHER'S

DAY!!!

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• **FOR NON-ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS:** We welcome those Christians not fully united with us. It is a consequence of the sad divisions of Christianity that we cannot extend to you a general invitation to receive Holy Communion. Orthodox Christians believe that the Eucharist is an action of the celebrating community signifying a oneness in faith, life, and worship. Reception of the Eucharist by Christians not fully united with us would imply a oneness which does not yet exist and for which we must all pray. We do however invite you to receive the blessed bread that is given out to all at the end of service. Thank you for coming and worshiping with us.
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Sunday Of The Blind Man

I am never out as late at night as I am after the Pascha liturgy and the party that follows. In the midst of that dark night, Pascha is a light shining in the darkness and blindness of this world. Around midnight, one candle is lit, and the priest chants, "Come receive the light from the Light that is never overtaken by night, and glorify Christ Who is risen from the dead." Then we all light our candles, exit the church, sing His resurrection, and glorify His victory over death as we enter into the beauty of a brightly lit church. The Pascha service is truly a glorious experience.

But if we limit the bright light of Pascha to that service or even to a 40-day season, we will have missed the point. For in Christ's resurrection, our Lord brings light to the entire world. He restores sight to the blind and gives life to the dead. He opens the darkest tomb to the brilliant light of life eternal. The light of His resurrection floods the entire universe.

But we must not rest content with general statements about the light of Christ, for we are all to be illumined by Him to the very depths of our hearts and souls. Like the man whom Jesus Christ healed in today's gospel text, we are all blind from birth: held captive by the corruptions of death, our passions, and the accumulated weight of human sin all around us. We have worshipped the creature, especially ourselves, instead of the Creator. We have looked for fulfillment in the vanity of life: money, power, pleasure, appearances, impressing others, and getting our own way. We find it easy to think only of ourselves and our will, but so hard to live with the humility and selfless love of Christ. We define ourselves over against other people, and build ourselves up by putting them down and harboring resentment. So much of our life has been a wandering in darkness and we may have despaired of things ever getting any better. At times, we may not have the eyes to see any light at all.

The good news of Pascha is that, in Christ, we may pass over from this living death to life eternal. The spiritual blindness of our souls may be healed. If we develop the eyes to see it, we may leave behind our slavery to sin, our addiction to the passions, and the distortion of ourselves that we have brought about. We may rise up from these darkened, pointless ways of living to the light, truth, and joy of the kingdom of heaven. We may share in Christ's eternal life, in His victory over sin and death, even now.

But we have to be honest with ourselves: it is much easier to remain in the darkness than to move into the light. Just as our eyes need time to adjust when we leave a movie theater and walk into the sunshine of a summer day, the eyes of our souls are not cleansed in an instant. Our salvation is not a magic act, but requires our intentional, patient cooperation with the grace of the Great Physician. There is simply no alternative to perseverance, to accepting bravely the tension and struggle that we experience when

we expose our darkened souls to the healing light of Christ, and to mindfully turning away from temptations of whatever kind.

There is too much in all of us that prefers the darkness to the light. We are all quite comfortable with some of our sins and passions. We have gotten used to them and may have accepted the lie that we are justified in doing so out of honesty, out of being true to ourselves. Just as a blind person may cope quite well with a lack of vision and get used to navigating the world in darkness, we may have become experts in how to justify our actions, condemn others, and keep God on the margins of our life. All too often, we have become too well adjusted to our own spiritual darkness.

Now there may be something to be said for being psychologically well adjusted, but our faith is not about coping well with the darkness. It is about being illumined by the Light of the world, about participating in the brilliant new day of the resurrection, about sharing in the glory of life eternal. Our goal is to shine with the light of God, like an iron in the fire. Of course, no one of us is worthy of such a transition from death to life and no one of us has achieved it perfectly. Indeed, to think of our life in Christ as an achievement is a mistake, for we share in the great blessing of the Lord's victory over death by His mercy, not our accomplishment.

But if we are not doing all we can to open the dark places of our lives to the light of Christ, we are abusing His mercy, using the hope of forgiveness as an excuse not to cooperate with the Lord's healing. Our Savior told the blind man to go to a pool and wash. The man did and he was healed. Too often, we do not obey the clear instructions that Christ has given us for our spiritual healing: to love God with every bit of who we are and to live our neighbors as ourselves; to forgive those who have wronged us; to serve the poor, sick, and needy with every bit of attention that we should show to the Lord Himself; to close our eyes and ears to temptation; to shut our mouths when want to stay say something hateful; and to focus on our own failings instead of those of others.

As we near the end of the season of Pascha, we should all wrestle seriously with the question of whether we are really doing what we can to open ourselves to the light of Christ. Are we obeying the Lord's instructions on how to find healing in our souls? Are we keeping a close watch on our thoughts and disregarding those that tempt us to sin? Are we following a rule of prayer and fasting that reorients our daily life toward God and helps us find healing from our passions? Are we preparing faithfully to receive our Lord's Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist each Sunday? Do we take confession regularly and ask for the forgiveness of others whenever we wrong them?

Finding healing from our spiritual blindness is no more complicated—no harder or easier—than living the basic Christian life that we all know we should live. There are no secret codes or handshakes; no one is required to achieve heights of asceticism that are beyond his or her ability; no one should try to become some kind spiritual super hero. The brilliant light of Pascha shines on us all and we must learn to accept the course of our lives, no matter how painful or disappointing, as our path to the Kingdom. Despite differences in life circumstances and personalities, we all have the

same kind of work to do: bit by bit, step by step, opening the eyes of our souls to a light so bright that we think it will blind us. But there is the irony: we are already blind. The light of Christ comes not to blind, but to give sight; not to condemn, but to save; not to kill, but to bring life eternal.

At the end of this glorious season of Pascha, let us all open our eyes and souls to the light of our Lord, Who is never overtaken by night, and glorify Christ who is risen from the dead.

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.

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

May this Pascha provide us not only with memories of beautiful services and rich food, but more importantly with personal participation in the brilliant light of Kingdom of God, shining in the dark places of our lives, illuminating every dimension of who we are, and drawing us ever more fully into the life of the One Who has conquered death and sin. He alone is our salvation and our hope. For Christ is Risen!

Taken from Fr. Phillip LeMasters on PRAVMIR.COM

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.