



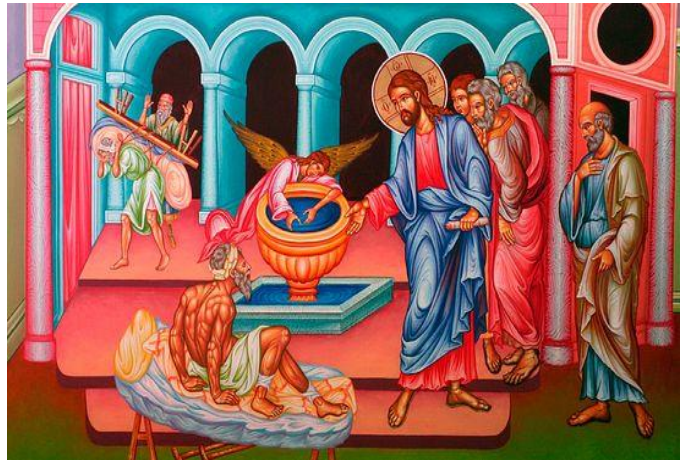
Prophet Elias News

News in the time of self –isolation for the Orthodox Church of
the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
10th May 2020



Sermon by Metropolitan Anthony – Sunday of the Paralytic 21st May 200

How tragic today's story of the life of Christ is. A man had been paralysed for years. He had lain at a short distance from healing, but he himself had no strength to merge into the waters of ablu­tion. And no one - no one in the course of all these years - had had compassion on him. The other ones rushed to be the first in order to be healed. Those who were attached to them by love, by friendship, helped them to be healed. But no one cast a glance at this man, who for years had longed for healing and was not in himself able to find strength to become whole. If only one person had been there, if only one heart had responded with compassion, this man might have been whole years and years earlier. As no one, not one person, had compassion on him, all that was left to him - and I say '*all that was left to him*' with a sense of horror - was the direct intervention of God.



We are surrounded by people who are in need. It is not only people who are physically paralysed who need help. There are so many people who are paralysed in themselves, and need to meet someone who would help them. Paralysed in themselves are those who are terrified of life, because life has been an object of terror for them since they were born: insensitive parents, heartless, brutal surroundings. How many are those who hoped, when they were still small, that there would be something for them in life. But no. There wasn't. There was no compassion. There was no friendliness. There was *nothing*. And when they tried to receive comfort and support, they did not receive it. Whenever they thought they could do something they were told, 'Don't try. Don't you understand that you are incapable of this?' And they felt lower and lower.

How many were unable to fulfil their lives because they were physically ill, and not sufficiently strong... But did they find someone to give them a supporting hand? Did they find anyone who felt so deeply for them and about them that they went out of their way to help? And how many those who are terrified of life, lived in circumstances of fear, of violence, of brutality... But all this could not have overwhelmed them if there had been someone who stood by them and not abandoned them.

So we are surrounded, all of us, by people who are in the situation of this paralytic man. If we think of ourselves we will see that many of us *are* paralysed, incapable of fulfilling all their aspirations; incapable of being what they longed for, incapable of serving others the way their heart speaks; incapable of doing anything they longed for because fear, brokenness has come into them.

And all of us, *all of us* are responsible for each of them. We are responsible, mutually, for one another; because when we look right and left at the people who stand by us, what do we know about them? Do we know how broken they are? How much pain there is in their hearts? How much agony

there has been in their lives? How many broken hopes, how much fear and rejection and contempt that has made them contemptuous of themselves and unable even to respect themselves - not to speak of having the courage of making a move towards wholeness, that wholeness of which the Gospel speaks in this passage and in so many other places?

Let us reflect on this. Let us look at each other and ask ourselves, 'How much frailty is there in him or her? How much pain has accumulated in his or her heart? How much fear of life - but life expressed by my neighbour, the people whom I should be able to count on for life - has come in to my existence? Let us look at one another with understanding, with attention. Christ is there. He can heal; yes. But we will be answerable for each other, because there are so many ways in which we should be the eyes of Christ who sees the needs, the ears of Christ who hears the cry, the hands of Christ who supports and heals or makes it possible for the person to be healed.

Let us look at this parable of the paralytic with new eyes; not thinking of this poor man two thousand years ago who was so lucky that Christ happened to be near him and in the end did what every neighbour should have done. Let us look at each other and have compassion, active compassion; insight; love if we can. And then this parable will not have been spoken or this event will not have been related to us in vain. Amen.

CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!

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Texts from the Pentacostarion for the Sunday of the Paralytic

The paralytic, who was like unto an unburied dead man, saw Thee and cried out: 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, for my bed is become my grave. Of what profit is my life? I have no need for the Sheep's Pool, for there is no one to put me therein when the waters are troubled. But I come unto Thee, O Source of healings, that together with all I also may cry: O Almighty Lord, glory to Thee.'

At the Sheep's Pool a man lay infirm; and upon seeing Thee, O Lord, he cried: 'I have no man, that, when the water is troubled, he might lift me and place me therein. But when I go, another goeth before me and receiveth healing.' And straightway, the Saviour had compassion upon him, saying unto him: 'For thee I became a man, for thee I have been clothed in flesh, and sayest thou: I have no man? Take up thy bed and walk.' All things are possible for Thee, all things are obedient to Thee, all things are subject to Thee: remember us all and have mercy on us, O Holy One, since Thou art the Lover of mankind.

Kontakion

By Thy divine intercession, O Lord, as Thou didst raise up the paralytic of old, so raise up my soul, paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts; so that being saved I may sing to Thee: 'Glory to Thy power, O compassionate Christ!'

Paschal Messages

The Paschal Messages of His All-holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholemew and of His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas can be found on the Deanery website at www.thyateira-deanery.co.uk

Library Corner

I am just about to re-embark on *Titus Groan*, the first novel of Mervyn Peake's extraordinary *Gormenghast* trilogy. How to describe this strange world – which feels like a mixture of the *Morte d'Arthur* and Dickens and JG Ballard, with perhaps a touch of Terry Pratchett? The first volume tells of the birth and first two years of the life of Titus, heir to the Earldom of Groan and its centuries of rigid traditions and stifling ceremonial. The action takes place entirely within the sprawling castle of Gormenghast and develops very, very slowly as we get to know each of its weird but utterly human inhabitants. I thought the claustrophobic atmosphere might suit lockdown, so - I'm just going inside: I may be some time...

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Saint Brendan the Voyager

On 16th May we celebrate Saint Brendan, Abbot of Clonfert in County Galway (c486 – 578). Known as Brendan the Voyager, he is famous for his feats of navigation in the North Atlantic, described in the 9th Century account *The Voyage of Saint Brendan the Abbot*. Many Irish monastics regarded the ocean as their desert, and set off into the unknown trusting only in God and in their small leather boats (currachs). Sailing with several companions, Saint Brendan certainly reached the Faroe Islands and Iceland, returning to Ireland by way of the Azores. Some believe that during the voyage they had reached the New World in Nova Scotia by way of Greenland, 500 years before the Viking expeditions to Vinland.



We take this icon with us on our sea voyages, and gave a copy to the Bridge of mv Marco Polo. Last year when we were on her up in the Arctic we visited the Bridge to take more photos of the icon in situ (our ones at the original unveiling didn't come out well). We told the story of St Brendan to the two junior officers on watch and they responded 'He is keeping us safe'. On the starboard side there is another voyager – an icon of St Nicholas.

PRAYER OF ST. BRENDAN

Help me to journey beyond what is familiar, and into the unknown.
Give me the faith to leave old ways and find new land with You.
Christ of the mysteries, I trust You to be stronger than each storm within me.
I will trust in the darkness and know that my times, even now, are in Your hand.
Tune my spirit to the music of heaven, and make my obedience count for You. Amen.

The Praying Hands

Christa very kindly contributed this lovely story about Durer. In these trying times when we are trying to be kind, this seems a good example.



'The Praying Hands' was created as a result of a remarkable relationship between two artists, Albert Durer and his friend Franz Knigstein.

As students they both worked as part-time labourers to try to earn enough money to carry on their studies. However, in the economic climate of the time there was no way that either could both study and have time to earn enough with casual part-time jobs to survive in this way. They decided to draw lots to decide which of them should find full-time employment and support them both while the winner would then devote all his energies to his studies.

Albert Durer won, and agreed that when his studies were complete he would return and finance his friend's studies. However, when Durer, having become a great success in his field, eventually came back to fulfil his promise, he discovered the sacrifice that Knigstein had made was far greater than either had foreseen. Through hard labour Franz's fingers had

become twisted and bent. They could no longer delicately control an artist's brush and he could never hope to become a great painter. However, Knigstein displayed no bitterness. He was glad to have played his part in his friend's success.

One day Durer found Franz at prayer and was so struck by his hands that he sketched them and later completed one of the great masterpieces of the early Renaissance period that we now know as 'The Praying Hands'.

It carries a story of love, faith, sacrifice and gratitude.
(published by Tim Tiley Ltd Bristol)