

**Week of  
April 30th  
2017**

**You can reach Fr. Luke at  
frlukacs@gmail.com  
or at  
(613) 925-3004**

**Please leave a clear  
message and include your  
phone number**

**Next Divine Liturgy**

**May 7th  
Sunday  
10:00 am  
Sunday of the  
Paralytic**

**All welcome!**

**St. Olympia Chapel  
123 Main Street  
Potsdam, NY**

**Sayings from the  
Desert Fathers**

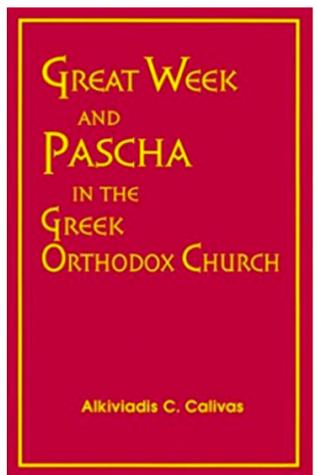
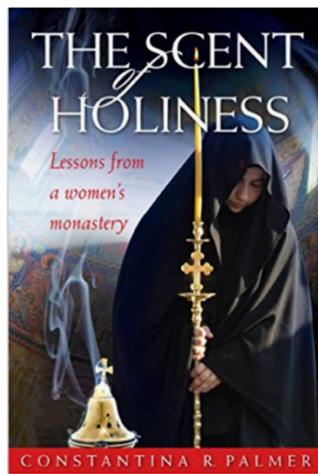
Amma Theodora said that a teacher ought to be a stranger to the desire for domination, vain-glory, and pride; one should not be able to fool him by flattery, no blind him by gifts, nor conquer him by the stomach, nor dominate him by anger; but he should be patient, gentle and humble as far as possible; he must be tested and without partisanship, full of concern, and a lover of souls.

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Going to town one day to sell some small articles, Abba Agathon met a man on the roadside, paralyzed in his legs, who asked him where he was going. Abba Agathon replied, "To town, to sell some things." The other said, "Do me the favor of carrying me there. So he carried him to the town. The man said to him. "Put me down where you sell your wares." Abba Agathon did so. When he had sold an article, the man asked, "What did you sell it for?" and he told him the price. The other said, "Buy me a cake," and he bought it. When Abba Agathon had sold a second article, the man asked, "How much did you sell it for?" and he told him the price of it. Then the man said, "Buy me this," and he bought it. When Agathon, having sold all his wares, wanted to go, the man said to him, "Are you going back?" and he replied, "Yes." Then said he, "Do me the favor of carrying me back to the place where you found me." Once more picking him up, he carried him back to that place. Then the man said, "Agathon, you are filled with divine blessings, in heaven and on earth." Raising his eyes, Agathon saw no man; it was an angel of the Lord, come to try him.

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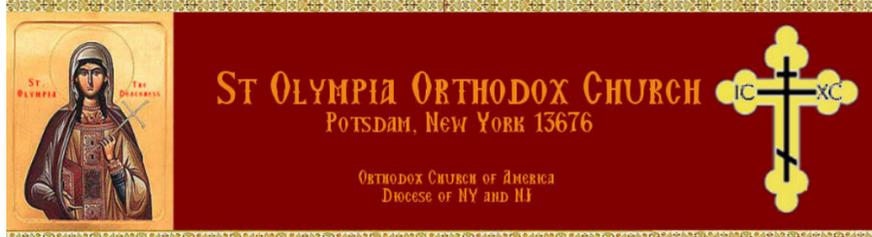
Amma Sarah said, "If I prayed God that all men should approve of my conduct, I should find myself a penitent at the door of each one, but I shall rather pray that my heart may be pure towards all."



**Planning Ahead**

Archbishop Michael's next visits to Potsdam will be:

**Saturday-Sunday,  
September 9-10, 2017**



**Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church, a young and, God willing, growing community of worshippers.**

**Join us for prayer and fellowship. Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday and are primarily in English.**

**Visit us on Facebook or [www.saintolympiaorthodoxchurch.org](http://www.saintolympiaorthodoxchurch.org)**

## Christ is risen!

The Fourth Sunday of Pascha is called the Sunday of the Paralytic but in might be more correct to refer to it as "Sunday of the Paralytics" since both the Epistle and Gospel readings of that day involve two different, yet similar healings (Acts 9:32-42 and John 5:1-5).

One reason for the choice of this Gospel passage is likely because it is within the tradition of the Church that the feast mentioned is the *Shavuot* or "Feast of Weeks." This is the Jewish Pentecost that commemorates both the giving of Law to Moses on Mount Sinai seven weeks after the Exodus from Egypt as well as the harvesting of wheat in the land of Israel on the 50th day after the Passover, so the day is also known as "First Fruits." Jesus' return to Jerusalem would have been in fulfillment of the law that all male Israelites were to appear before Yahweh three times each year: Passover, Pentecost and Sukkoth (Deut. 16:16). However, by the time of Christ, Shavuot had declined in importance in Jewish tradition which may explain why the feast is not named specifically. Yet, as we approach the Christian fulfillment of this feast, we are reminded of its roots.

When Jesus approached the Temple, he saw "a great multitude of sick people" but he chose only one, a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years and who seemingly would have no hope of being the first into the pool so that he could be cured. Yet this man had persevered in his faith. Christ asks him, "Do you want to be made well?" This question might seem almost ridiculous on the surface, but the meaning is much deeper. Often when we are physically, mentally or spiritually ill, we do not really want to be made well. For example, we might rather have people's pity, or an excuse not to work, or use an incapacity as a means of control over loved ones. Wholeness is a blessing but also a responsibility. The paralytic answered that there was no one man to help him to get to the cure. Yet standing in front of him was the God-Man who could and does heal him. Christ restores him to wholeness, rewarding his unwavering perseverance.

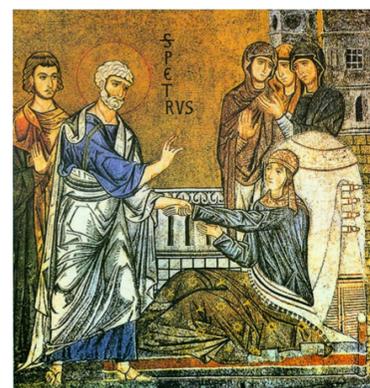
A more theologically significant reason for including this passage at this time of year is that the period from Pascha to Pentecost is the season of the newly-baptized, and the stirring of the pool by the angel is a prefiguring of baptism.

"That water [at the pool of Bethesda] was moved once a year; this water of the Church's baptism is always ready to be moved. That water was moved only in one place; this water is moved throughout the entire world. Then an angel descended; now it is the Holy Spirit. Then it was the grace of the angel; now it is the mystery of the Trinity. That water cured only once in a year; this water saves people every day. That water healed the body; this water heals both body and soul. That water healed a person's health; this heals from sin. There, the body was only healed of its infirmities; here, body and soul are freed from sin. There, many who were weary lay sick at that water because it only cured one person a year. No one will be left lying sick here where the waters of baptism are, if they resolve to come and be healed." --Chromatius of Aquileia

The Epistle reading involves the Apostle Peter who similarly heals Aeneas, a man who had been paralyzed for eight years. St. Peter also resurrects Tabitha, a disciple and person of "good works and charitable deeds" in Joppa. The pairing of the Gospel and Epistle readings shows us that the Church retains the healing power of Jesus Christ to this day, by the will of God through the Holy Spirit. It is through Christ and His Church that we can be restored to wholeness.



*Christ healing the paralytic  
Wall fresco from the monastery of  
St. John Lambadistis, Cyprus*



*St. Peter raising Tabitha  
Early 6th-century Byzantine mosaic  
San Vitale, Ravenna*

**New to our library:**

***The Scent of Holiness: Lessons from a Women's Monastery*** by Constantina Palmer

From the back cover:

Every monastery exudes the scent of holiness, but women's monasteries have their own special flavor. Join Constantina Palmer as she makes frequent pilgrimages to a women's monastery in Greece and absorbs the nuns' particular approach to their spiritual life... "In *The Scent of Holiness*, [she] offers the reader a firsthand account of her contact with and immersion in the life of Orthodox monasticism....The major features of Orthodoxy are humility and love. In our troubled world, Constantina's writings show us that these virtues and others still exist; the many monks and nuns who have dedicated their lives to prayer and ascetic endeavor keep them alive."

***Great Week and Pascha in the Greek Orthodox Church*** by Alkiviadis Calivas

From the back cover:

In ***Great Week and Pascha in the Greek Orthodox Church***, Fr. Alkiviadis Calivas traces the development of the liturgical celebration of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. Fr. Calivas elegantly describes the theological themes for each day, clarifies the liturgical practices, and provides rubrics for their proper celebration. Through the text, the reader can find answers to many questions about Great Week as well as insights into meaningful participation in each of the services. According to the author, "Everything converges on the person of Jesus Christ, who was betrayed, crucified and buried, and who rose on the day. These events are the keystones to the structure of Great Week. Through them we embrace the mystery of our salvation."

***The Life of Saint Alexios: The Man of God*** translated and edited by Peter A. Chamberas

From the back cover:

Perhaps the universal appeal which St. Alexios enjoys among Orthodox Christians can be attributed to his wonderful example of a truly ascetical and self-effacing spirituality. In our time, "modern man" is still pondering over the ancient question "What is man?" without having made up his mind. Neither the one-sided social dimension of man, nor the prevailing conventional religiosity can provide a true and authentic identity for the human person, created in the image and likeness of God. It is for this very reason, that this humble icon of a man is offered to our devout readers.